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A
L E T T E R

To a Gentleman Dissenting from the
CHURCH of *ENGLAND*;

CONCERNING
T H E L I V E S
O F
Churchmen and Dissenters.

W H E R E I N

Dr. WATTS's Book, entitled *An humble Attempt towards the Revival of Practical Religion among Christians*, so far as relates to this Subject, is largely examined; and the popular Argument (or Prejudice) arising from the *supposed*, or *real* better Lives of DISSENTERS, in favour of their Churches, is fully considered.

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THE SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N,

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PREFACE.

THE Lives of Churchmen and Dissenters, which are the Subject of the ensuing Letter, have been but rarely, and then only occasionally, touched upon in those Controversial Writings, which from time to time have passed between them. The Dissenters not having, it seems, thought fit to insist much upon those Points in the *Argumentative*, but only in the *Invective* or *Declamatory* Way, the Writers on our Side did not seem to think they had any Occasion to consider them. But, in my Opinion, we should have done it of ourselves. For I am greatly mistaken, if, for one who renounces the

Communion of the Eſtabliſhed Church upon any *Scruple* about conforming to the Conſtitution, the Rites, and Ceremonies thereof, there are not ten who do it merely in purſuance of a Notion they are poſſeſſed with of *better Edifying* and *better Living* in their Churches. And if ſo, the putting their People in a *right way of Thinking*, in regard to thoſe two Points, would help more to weaken, and go farther towards putting an end to the unhappy Schiſm they are engaged in, than the completeſt and moſt unanſwerable Vindication of the Conſtitution, and of all the Forms and Appointments of the Church. The former of theſe Notions has been often largely conſidered, and excellently well refuted, particularly in the *London Caſes*. The latter I here undertake to conſider; no body elſe, as I before intimated, at leaſt ſo far as I know, having yet done it
to

to any purpose. I have been rash enough to take the occasion, which was given me, to animadvert upon one of their worthiest Ministers and ablest Writers ; he having said more upon this Subject than I have met with elsewhere. I have considered the *special Obligations* which he supposes Dissenters under to greater Holiness of Life ; and I have made appear, that the *peculiar Advantages*, which he also pretends *they* enjoy, above *the Members of the Church*, towards the same End, are none at all ; but, on the contrary, that *we* have many Advantages of that sort, which are wholly wanting in *their Churches*. I have offered divers Considerations upon the Lives of Churchmen and our Dissenting Brethren, as well Ministers as People ; and have shewn, I hope, they have not so much on those accounts, to boast of, as, I suppose, is commonly apprehended ;
and

and what they have is not owing to any peculiar Excellencies and superiour Advantages, in their Way, towards nourishing Men up in Goodness, but to Circumstances and Causes of a quite different nature ; and that, after all, Religion is to be tried only by the Doctrines and Practices thereof, and not by the Lives of its Professors.

I hope I may be allowed to take the Notice I have of this Gentleman, without offending either *him* or others. He himself observes, in the Book which I am now considering, p. 138. *It may not be improper in some Parts of their Ministrations to enter into the Merits of the Cause, and modestly to give their People the Reasons why they separate from the Public Worship of the Parish.* And then, doubtless, he will allow me modestly to shew that those are no Reasons ; especially when this is done,

as

as I here declare it to be, with no more Intention to maintain a Controversy with *him*, than *he* professes to have to begin one with his Brethren of the Established Church; though I must say, too, when Things so highly, and, at the same time, so injuriously reflecting upon it are advanced, and published to the World, he could not, I think, reasonably expect to escape, and I admire he has hitherto escaped Animadversion from one or other.

A Design of the Nature set forth above, if it were well executed, would, I believe, be thought an essential Service to the Church of *England*. How it has been executed in the following Writing, the ingenuous Reader is to judge. But if it had not been thought that some *small* Service to Religion and the Church of G O D might be expected, or, however, *hoped for* from it,

it, I should have indulged my Reluctances, and given way to those Reasons which were rising continually in my Mind against making it public, and let it remain with me an *Anecdote* for ever.

The Reader is desired to correct the Errors of the Press thus :

Page 53.	Line 11.	<i>insert of between Profession and Stricness.</i>
<i>ib.</i>	34.	<i>dele the full Stop after Advantage.</i>
67.	23.	<i>instead of within read with in.</i>
83.	37.	<i>instead of but doubt read doubt but.</i>
85.	16.	<i>instead of that read than:</i>
88.	35.	<i>insert is between it and so.</i>

A
L E T T E R
C O N C E R N I N G
T H E L I V E S

O F

Churchmen and Dissenters, &c.

S I R,

THE last time we were together, at the House of Mr. G——, our Neighbour and common Friend, in that delightful *Alcove* which commands one of the finest Prospects in the World, being the Anniversary of the Restoration of King *Charles* the Second and the Royal Family, the Conversation, as on such a Day was natural, turned, for a while, upon the *marvellous Footsteps* of divine Providence in that Revolution, and the *happy Effects* of it. In abatement of which, however, one of the Company took notice of that Deluge of Debauchery and Profaneness which *then* broke in upon us. And hereupon, as you doubtless remember, you was pleased to observe, “ that “ the Corruption was not general, but one Part “ of the Nation yet held to their former Strict- “ ness.” And you farther added, in Terms, however, as your way always is, very respectful to the
B Company,

Company, who were hearty and serious Conformists to the Church of *England*, “ that there was
 “ *then*, and has been *ever since*, in the Lives of
 “ the two Parties of Churchmen and Dissenters, a
 “ Difference so visible, and so greatly to the ad-
 “ vantage of the latter, as to be, to you, a mighty
 “ Confirmation in the way of Non-conformity you
 “ was in; since it *must*, and did apparently proceed
 “ from some special Advantages, towards growing
 “ in Grace and Goodness, *you* enjoyed above the
 “ Members of the Church. For you could not
 “ help thinking, *that* was the best Religion which
 “ had the most of those Advantages and did ac-
 “ cordingly produce the best Fruits.” — And
 you took that occasion to recommend a Book
 written by your very ingenious Friend Dr. *Watts*,
 entitled *An Attempt towards the Revival of Practi-
 cal Religion among Christians*, wherein this Subject
 (you told us) is largely handled. — You had no
 sooner done, but I perceived the Eyes of the whole
 Company turn upon *me*; not, I suppose, as one
 whom they thought abler than themselves to say
 what was proper to be said, but as one whom it
 would not become, by reason of his Cloth, to be
 wanting, on such an occasion, to vindicate the Ho-
 nour of, and do right to the Church of *England*.
 This drove me from my natural Taciturnity;
 and therefore addressing myself to you — I rea-
 dily acknowledged, that a great Debauchery of
Manners did come in with the *Restoration*, as a
 Debauchery of *Principles* came in with another
Revolution that has since happened, which, never-
 theless, we *then* gratefully received, and think on
now with Pleasure. And if the *Debauchery of that
 Time* did not reach the Non-conformists, it was,
 perhaps, because the *Joy of that Time* did not reach
 them neither. The great and sudden Joy of the
 Royal

Royal Party, for their happy Deliverance from a long and grievous Oppression, made them almost mad, (as the Oppression itself, according to *Solomon's* Observation, had before made them, though in a different way) and pushed them on into many Extravagancies and sinful Follies. But *your* Joy, on that occasion, being so very *moderate*, we may cease to wonder, that it did not transport *you* into any Excesses, or do much injury to your Morals. This is all, as I remember, I thought necessary to say upon that Head. — But as to your being confirmed in your present way of Non-conformity by seeing the Difference of Life between Churchman and Dissenter, so much, you said, *to the advantage of the latter*; I took *that* to be a Matter of greater Moment, and so thought it necessary to enter *deeper* into it; and did accordingly offer many things, to shew you how false and delusive, how groundless and unreasonable your Satisfaction was. Some of these, if I was not deceived, and that greatly too, stuck with you. And my observing *this* made me, afterwards, that I could not be easy within myself, without doing something more, to *lower*, and, if possible, to *take quite away*, that Satisfaction, which, I plainly saw, was so pernicious to you.

To say truth, I was, at first, not a little surprized, to find *You* in *such* a train of Thinking. I could not but admire, how a Gentleman, though not brought up in the Schools of Learning, yet so much improved by Conversation, and by *running to and fro* in the way of Commerce, whereby the Mind is enlarged, and *Knowledge is encreased*, and who, since his Retirement to that elegant Seat in the Country, and fine Estate about it, acquired by his Industry and prudent Management, has so much given himself up to Reading: I could not, I say,

but wonder, how a Gentleman of *your* Capacity and Understanding could be misled by *such* an Argument into the By-ways of Separation. But when, after a little Reflection, I came to consider you in another light, as one who has a Zeal for God and an ardent Desire to promote the Interests of Godliness and practical Religion, my wonder presently ceased; and I thought it natural *you* should think well of a Cause which may *seem* to have *some sort* of Connexion with those good Things. This, I plainly perceived, was your Prejudice, (for you must allow me to call it so) a laudable one indeed! if any Prejudice can be laudable, but such, however, as has a little blinded you, and led you already into some erroneous Ways, and, if you have not a care, may lead you into others that are yet more erroneous. It has blinded and misled Thousands before *you*. For, Sir, this is not *your own particular* Prejudice, but is *general* and *ancient*, and has been carefully *cultivated* among you from the very beginning of the Separation. ——— I have read somewhere, that in the Grand Rebellion a certain Officer, in the Service of the Parliament, being taken Prisoner by the Royalists, was by them kindly asked, How it was possible a Gentleman of his Education and Improvements could be engaged in so unrighteous a Cause? To whom he made this Reply; “ that he had not, perhaps, “ considered the Merits of the Cause so carefully as “ he ought to have done; being *prejudiced*, as he “ knew many others were, against his Majesty’s “ Service, by seeing the loose and disorderly Lives “ of many Cavaliers.” And the same poor Prejudice biassed many against the Church, in favour of the Sectaries of those Times. The greater Strictness of *these* in certain Points and Duties of Religion was no small Advantage to their Cause; and,

and, to give them their due, they were not wanting to make the most of it, by setting themselves forth, Ministers and People, as the *Genus sacra* (so I think *Lewis du Moulin* calls them) holy Men, of whom the World was not worthy; while the Bishops and Clergy were constantly represented as not only *Strangers to*, but even *Haters* and *Deriders* of serious Godliness; and the Laity adhering to them, almost one and all, as an ignorant, worldly, lewd, drunken, blasphemous Crew, a *World lying in Wickedness*. By this well chosen Topic for Declamation, they drew great Numbers after them. Dry Disputations about Church Government, and other Points in Difference between us, few of the People were either disposed or qualified to enter much into. They could not well judge of the Truth or Falshood of Principles and Doctrines; but they could easily distinguish between a sober and a sensual, a strict and a disorderly, a good and a bad Life. And when they had found who they were that led the best *Lives*, they had found, as they thought, who had the best *Religion*. The old Managers of the Dissenting Cause would have been loth, I guess, to offer this Argument to the World in a *strict* and *logical* way; but were willing, 'tis plain, the Multitude, as they did, should run away with it. The Pretence was specious, and not ill suited to those Times, when there confessedly was, among *them*, a greater Strictness in some laudable Practices of Religion, than was, commonly, seen among the Members of the Church; a greater Difference in their Lives, than there *now* appears to be. The present Degeneracy and Corruption of Manners is so great, and so nigh universal, as leaves little room, a Man would think, for either *Harangue* or *Argument* of this nature. But 'tis a Topic, I perceive,

perceive, too popular and captivating, to be easily forsaken; and we see your Writers now and then striving to make something of it. And the *Humble Attempt, &c.* which you so heartily recommended (for your Recommendation, added to that Curiosity I had before to see every thing of that ingenious Gentleman's, set me immediately upon reading it) makes, here and there, some Efforts that way. And though the very *Attempt to revive practical Religion* among Dissenters, whom it is chiefly written for, and more particularly suited to, plainly implies in the Author an Opinion that it is, at present, in a low and languishing State, and ready to die away among them; yet he has taken care to intersperse, up and down, some Intimations, that there is yet such a wide Difference in the Lives of Churchmen and Dissenters, as may well recommend the Religions of the later (any, or all of them, I suppose) to our Choice and Preference. — I shall beg leave to lay before you some Strictures which I have drawn up on those Parts of the Book which have relation to the Subject of our Discourse, particularly, where he asserts, and, at large, maintains, that you are not only under *special Obligations*, but also enjoy divers *peculiar Advantages* above us in Matters of Religion, and towards rising to the highest Degrees of Christian Holiness and Perfection; and then add some farther Considerations, which did not occur to my Thoughts at the time of our late Conversation, in hopes thereby to *finish* your Conviction.

I begin then, with those *Obligations* which you and other Protestant Dissenters are supposed to be under to a more exemplary Holiness of Life. These, Sir, I do assure you, I am no way inclined to dispute. You shall think, for me, there are as many of them lying upon you, as you please. The more
and

and greater you apprehend them to be, the more likely you will be to comply with them, and to be led thereby to those higher Attainments in Religion to which this worthy Gentleman is conducting you. Yet I cannot but observe, most of the *special obligations* which he suggests are fitter, though I hope they were not intended, to stir up in your Minds a Spirit of bitter Strife and Animosity against the Church and Churchmen, than a Spirit of Holiness and Sanctification among yourselves.

One special Obligation, it seems, to your living holy, that so you may secure your eternal Interests in the *next* World, is taken from its being your Portion to suffer so much in *this*. You are therefore bid——*Awake, awake, my Friends. —Do you not aim at something glorious and divine, that will counterpoize all the Evils you sustain? Awake—and let your Character and Piety brighten upon the World; let your uncontested Virtues shine among Men; let them efface all the Gloom and Darknes that is thrown upon your Names, and overpower the unrighteous Scandal. What? shall we be cast out of all public Offices, Trusts, and Salaries, as Men unworthy of civil Benefits and Honours, and, in many Instances, be retrenched of the more private and common Profits of this World, and yet content ourselves to obtain none of the Treasures, that relate to another World, in the room of them? Shall we bear the Scoffings of our Neighbours, and be derided as Fools and Fanatics? Shall we be reviled as Men of Humour and Hypocrisy, as Deceivers and false Brethren, and content ourselves to bear all these Indignities in the present Life, without gaining any thing by it, with regard to Grace, Righteousness, and Life to come^a.*”

—— But why, I pray, all this unreasonable Ag-

^a p. 191.

gravation? Why all this *Enthusiasm*? this Vehemence of Expression? this Pomp of Words? Does the Occasion *require* it? or, indeed, will it *bear* it? In my poor opinion, these are Things fitter to be said to the late *Salizburgh Emigrants*, than to Protestant Dissenters in *South Britain*. If your Case, Sir, is here rightly represented, you must have a sad time of it. One cannot imagine less, than that some of you are condemned in *heavy Fines* or haled to *Prison*; that others dare not *shew their Heads*, or are *booted thro' the Streets* with Reproach and Obloquy, or *kissed off the Exchange*, and affronted in all public Companies, and private Conversations. But is there any thing like it? There may be perhaps here and there a *pleasant* Fellow who has his *Joke* for you, or a *malapert* one, who shall call you *Fools* or *Fanatics*. But are there none who have their Flings, too, at Churchmen, and for their *Fools* and *Fanaticks* return them the Compliments of mere *Formalists*, *angry Bigots*, *fiery Zealots*, *Sons of Violence*, *furious Persecutors*, *Popishly affected*, *Enemies to the present Settlement of the Crown*, *Haters of Godliness and godly Men*, and the like? I doubt there are; and those, too, of a higher Class than such of us as are commonly guilty of the Petulancies abovementioned. And yet, I think, I should hardly reckon this a reasonable Topic to argue upon with my Friends of the Established Church; nor call upon them to take care to be happy in the next World, *that so they may counterpoize all the Evils they sustain in this* from the Hands of Dissenters.

I don't believe you, Sir, can ever approve of those invidious complaints of Persecution and Oppression with which your Writers have filled the World for many Years past. For you can't help
seeing

seeing there is not the least Reason for them, and that they are evidently meant only to serve a Cause. 'Tis a fine thing to have the Credit of being persecuted for Religion, when one feels nothing of it. And besides, when the Notion of such a thing once gets among the blind and undiscerning Multitude, it may help to stir up and mislead their Passions, excite their Pity, and bring in Converts to your Churches. But, methinks, they should have had some Consideration of, and Reverence for others, whose Eyes are more open than those of the Vulgar, yet can't discover the least Colour or Pretence for these heavy Complaints, and plainly see they are altogether groundless. For my own part, I never think of them without thinking of *Monf. De Meaux*, and his *Pastoral Letters* to the *Protestants of France*; and whether were the greater, the *Assurance* of that *Frenchman*, in telling the Protestants there, in the midst of their Sufferings and Terrors, that they had suffered nothing, that *no Violence had been offered to any one of them, in his Person or Goods, and that they had been so far from enduring Torments, that they had not so much as heard them mentioned*; or the *Modesty* of these, while in the full Enjoyment of Ease, Security, and Credit, they complain of Hardships and Oppressions, which of these (I say) were the greater, one is at some loss to determine.

As to your being *retrenched of the more private and common Profits of the World*, I know not well what the Gentleman means. But this I know, that a Dissenter in Trade (as most of you are) may be pretty secure of *all* of the same Way, and has commonly too *his Share* of his Conforming Neighbours (who, I'll say that for them, seldom trouble themselves much where they lay out their Money) for his Customers. And this, I hope, you will

allow is no Discouragement to — the Dissention. Were all the Members of the Church to follow their Examples, confining their Dealings to themselves, in the same Manner and Degree your People do, it would make the Meetings a good deal thinner than they are, and be, in fine, *the shortest Way with the Dissenters*. — Excuse me, good Sir, these last Words, which, I am sensible, have had, since the Days of *De Foe*, a disagreeable Sound in the Ears of all honest Men, as well as Dissenters. But, I use them not, I declare, like that insidious Wretch, by way of Proposal or Advice to those of our Communion, but merely by way of Reply to this Author's Complaint, that, by being Dissenters, they are great *Losers* as to *the common Profits of the World*. According to all the Observations I can make, they are far enough from being *Losers*, on that account; so far, that, if I had a Son brought up to any Trade, and had no Consideration, either for him or myself, of another World, I should be ready to say to him, at setting up — *My Son, get Money; and, in order to that, be a Dissenter*. — I cannot, indeed, pretend to any *Experience*, or much *Insight* into Matters of *Trade*; but I have Eyes to see, and Ears to hear what passes in the World. However, Sir, I am willing to put the Matter to *You*, and leave it with *your Conscience*. Whether you really think your being Dissenters (taking you one with another) is any Prejudice to you, in the Shop? Or did *You*, in particular, find it any to yourself, upon the *Exchange*? Or do you really believe, you might have raised, by Commerce, a fairer Estate than you have done, in case you had been a Churchman?

The other Grievance (if any Grievance it be) he complains of, that your Friends are shut out from all *Offices, Trusts, Salaries, civil Benefits, and Honours*,

is indeed more manifest. Yet I will engage, as simple as I sit here, it shall be removed, when they will lay down their Enmity to the Church, that is, in short, to one half part of the Constitution. And one would hope, they have not the Conscience to ask it, upon other Terms.

Their being Enemies, I expect you will tell me, to *one* part of the Constitution is not Ground enough for their being excluded from the *other*. Let it be then said, they are Enemies to both; for, certainly, they ought to be so esteemed. Church and State, here in *England*, are so incorporated and united, that they must have, like the married Pair, the same Friends and Enemies, and stand or fall together. And, as whoever is admitted into the Service of *one* has thereby great Opportunities of hurting the *other*; so whoever *actually* ruins *one* will be found *eventually*, if not *intentionally* to ruin the *other* also. And this is surely Reason enough why the Enemies or Disaffected to *either* should be excluded from *both*. It is upon these Grounds that it is thought reasonable and necessary (and, I dare say, by Dissenters, as well as others) that Nonjuring Clergymen should be excluded from all Promotions in the Church. A Nonjuring *Rector*, *Vicar*, or *Curate* has, to be sure, by Virtue and in the Way of his Office, Means and Opportunities to weaken and undermine the Civil State: and, if he should actually do it, the Church itself, together with the State, would be endangered. *He* therefore is shut out of the Church. Very well. But has not then (for Example) a Dissenting Mayor of a Corporation, by the Influence he has upon the Legislature, (especially as those Gentry *now* order Matters) greater Opportunities to undermine and subvert the Church? In which Case, the Civil State, I doubt, would stand as tottering, as the Church would in the other. And why, then, must

not *he* be excluded from the Service of the State? In a word, *common Sense* (if I have any) cries loudly, "Let *both* be excluded, or *both* admitted;" there being no Reason, that is fit to be owned, for excluding or admitting *one*, which will not hold as good for admitting, or excluding the *other*. And, since the *Church* is content to exclude, and lose the Services of many learned and pious Men, who are perfectly well affected to it, for the Safety of the *State* (though for its own too in the Issue) I think the *State* can do no less, in regard to the Safety of the *Church* (and indeed its own, in the Event of things) than return the Civility by keeping the Enemies of the Church out of *its* Service.

I entreat you, Sir, not to tell me that the Government may greatly suffer by being deprived of the Services of many wise and able Men. For if you will please to look about you, you will see something daily passing to convince you, that there are scarcely half so many Services, many as there are, to be done the Government, as there are *humble Servants*, Members of the Church of *England*, and of sufficient Abilities (as they, at least, think) to do them; and the letting in a Multitude of Competitors and Expectants more than there are already might only serve to encrease our Factions, as so many more must be, on course, disappointed of their Desires and Hopes, (which, doubtless they will, all, think just and reasonable,) and, consequently, grow discontented. Nor let their good Behaviour towards the present Government be pleaded: If they *have* behaved well towards the Government, they have done their Duty, but *they have done no more than was their Duty to do, and are unprofitable Subjects*. Have they stood always firm in their Allegiance, and never been found in any rebellious or seditious Practices? Then, with my consent, no
Pains

Pains and Penalties shall be inflicted on them; there shall be no Revocation of their *Toleration*; all their civil and religious Rights shall be preserved to them; and they shall live among us as securely, as the rest of his Majesty's good Subjects.

*Nec furtum feci, nec fugi, si mihi dicat
Servus; habes pretium, loris non ureris, aio.
Non hominem occidi; non pasces in cruce corvos.*

HORAT. *Epist. Lib. i. Ep. 16.*

As to any eminent and extraordinary Services they have ever rendered either to his present or late Majesty and their Government, they are not apparent to *me*. But were they ever so great, even tho' they had *placed* or *kept* the Crown on their Majesty's Heads, (as, I think, once, by their groundless and imprudent Boasts among their Neighbours ^b *that they had now a King of their own, and should soon have the Churches too, they helped to shake it*) whatever (I say) their Services to the Government may have been, it would be unreasonable, and *politically absurd* to reward them for them, by putting the Church into their Hands, by heaping upon them such Places of Power and Trust in the Government, as might enable them, and we are very sure, from their Principles and Affections, they would not fail to make use of, to overturn it.

As this Writer's Complaint is in itself *unreasonable*, so I would observe, it is somewhat *unreasonably* and *improperly* made in this Place:

Non erat his locus.

It looks a little odd, to find such heavy Com-

^b See Remarks upon the Lord Bishop of *Bangor's* Treatment of the Clergy and Convocation, p. 42. where this Behaviour of theirs is asserted and justly described.

plaints,

plaints, and these so often repeated, of your being cast out from all *Offices, Salaries, and so forth*, in a Book written purely to *revive Practical Religion* among you. Is it to be thought, the admitting you to *these* would be a *means to revive it*? Quite the contrary. *Practical Religion*, in your *last fifty Years of Ease and Security*, has confessedly and visibly decayed; and there is no doubt but it would decay proportionally more in *another fifty Years of high Trusts, public Offices, and Court Employments*. So that whoever has more the *Religion of Dissenters* than the *Dissenting Interest* at heart, instead of *re-pining* at their being kept out of Civil or Military Employments, would rather *congratulate* them upon it.—The Doctor, I perceive, is not thoroughly in the Sentiments of *Joseph*, who, when his Brethren came down into *Ægypt*, instead of placing them, as he might have done, in the *Class of Soldiers or Priests*, plainly told *Pharaoh* they were *Shepherds*, tho' *Shepherds*, he knew, were an *Abomination to the Ægyptians*, and their being such, by the Constitution of the *Ægyptian Government*, made them incapable of Places of Trust, Power, or Profit, and the highest Preferment they could ever have, was being made *Pharaoh's Herdsmen, and Rulers over his Cattle*. He seems to have been afraid that *Pharaoh* would make them Courtiers, or Commanders in the Army, and to have taken this way to prevent it: He wanted to have them a Land appointed them, where they might live separate from the *Ægyptians*, and be at a distance from the King's Court, that *so* they might more easily keep their Religion *pure and undefiled*. If this Gentleman was not *so* Self-denying as to wish that *his Brethren* might be *excluded* from all Trusts, Salaries, public Offices, and Court Employments, yet he might well have been content, for a Reason like that of *Joseph*, they should

should be *without* them. Had he address'd himself to them in some such Manner as this; " You are, indeed, my Friends, excluded from public Offices and Employments? but *let not your Hearts be troubled*. As Protestant Dissenters, you make an open Profession of great Tenderness of Conscience: But how hard is it, in this our Day, to keep a good Conscience, and not be made *Servants of Corruption*, in public Trusts and Employments; and there are but few, as you have Reason to suspect, that do it. There is a certain Contagion almost inseparably adhering to them. Besides, the Air of a Court, which they will oblige you to frequent, has always been held infectious.—*Exeat aula qui velit esse pius*. It makes the Heart dissolute, causes a strange Dissipation of Thought, and fills the Mind with such a Crowd of vain Images, as leaves little room for Objects of a more important and concerning nature. So that, far from a Matter of *Complaint*, I look upon it as one of the choicest *Advantages* you enjoy, above the Members of the National Church, of keeping a good Conscience, and growing in Grace and Goodness, that our Rulers have thought fit to lay *you* under some Disqualifications of this sort." — If, I say, he had spoken to his Friends of public Offices and Honours thus *slightingly*, and made *such an use* of their being excluded from them, I don't think it would have looked amiss, in a Treatise, purposely written to recover Dissenters from the present Corruption that is in the World, to a better Sense of Practical Religion, and more serious Godliness. I appeal to you, Sir, whether it would or not; nay, indeed, to this Gentleman himself, upon farther Consideration.

He says, *As you have the Courage to be singular in your Ways and Forms of Separation and Worship, you ought not to be ashamed or afraid to be singularly and eminently virtuous.* — It will be easily granted, you are very singular in your Forms of Worship and Ways of Separation. And, if I may take the liberty to recommend to You, Sir, one or two Books, as you have done one to me, I could wish you would please to peruse ^c one of Dr. Durel, wherein he has sufficiently shown the *Singularity* of your Forms of Worship; and ^d another of the excellent Mr. Bingham, which has made appear, beyond all Possibility of Reply, that the Grounds and Principles of your Separation from the Church of *England* are also *singular*, and such as would oblige you, were you to hold to them, to separate also from the *French Protestant Churches*, as well as *ours*. And I doubt not but the same might be shown after the same way in relation to other Churches, not excepting your Sister Church of *Scotland*, which, I humbly conceive, you cannot conform to, without renouncing, at least, without laying down on this Side the *Tweed*, to be taken up again at your Return, some of the main Principles which the Separation here in *England* is built upon. But, how singular soever you may be in these things, I don't see that any mighty Degree of Courage is required to make Profession of them. For though you are few, compared with the great Body of the Church of *England*, you are yet *enough to keep one another in Countenance*, and, if we may judge by some of your late high Demands and bold Transactions thereupon (which you, Sir, however, I have heard, would have no

^c Entitled *A View of the Government and public Worship of God in the reformed Churches.*

^d *French Churches Apology for the Church of England.*

hand in promoting) to hold up and support one another in a pretty good Degree of Assurance. I would have you consider, it asks a great deal more Courage and holy Fortitude to be *singularly virtuous* in a degenerate Age, and to maintain this Character at every Call of Providence, by asserting the Cause of God in the Company of profane Men, or in the midst of Infidels and Apostates, and withstanding the Solicitations and Importunities of Sinners, when they entice us; by being unawed by the Indifference, the Frowns, or the Threats, and not allured by the Smiles, the Caresses, or the Promises of the Great, to violate one's Duty in any Instance: I say, it requires a great deal more Courage and Resolution to be thus *singularly virtuous* in the midst of a corrupt World, than it does to own one's self, in this Country of almost unlimited Religious Liberty, a *Presbyterian* or *Independent*. How strangely then does this Argument conclude! It is thus: "Since
 " you have, my Friends, that *small Degree* of Cou-
 " rage that may be sufficient to profess yourselves,
 " *here*, Protestant Dissenters, it will be thought,
 " let me tell you, mighty strange, if you should
 " want that *higher Degree* of it, which is requisite
 " to your being *singularly virtuous* in the midst of a
 " wicked World."—This is the Reasoning; and false as it is, and must appear to all who have the least Knowledge of the World, I shall yet be glad if it prevail with any Dissenter to lead a Life more singularly and eminently holy. Only I was loth to let it pass, without taking the Sting out of it.

He tells you, p. 204. *You profess to maintain and vindicate Christian Liberty by your Dissent from the Established Church, and bear up and support the Freedom of Conscience, in opposition to all the Inventions and Impositions of Men.*—As if you had no *Inventions* and *Impositions* of your own! But, at

present, let that pass. Let us see, what Use he makes of your having discharged yourselves from the *Impositions* of the Church. Why, he infers from it two things; *the first*, a special Obligation upon you to see to it, that *you turn not your Freedom from the imposed Rules of Men into a Release of your Conscience and Practice from any of the Laws of God*. But, I doubt, it will be found, that the releasing yourselves from the Unity and Communion of the Church, only for enjoining one or two decent and becoming Ceremonies, *is releasing your Conscience and Practice from one of the Laws of God*; he no where, in his holy Word, allowing you to go out from any sound Part of the Catholic Church, on any such account. The other Inference is, that *you impose not your own private Opinions, or particular unscriptural Practices, upon your Neighbours, and particularly, not upon your Brethren of the Established Church*. This is very well, and reasonably inferred from the Premises. But how does he infer from *these* Premises a special Obligation upon *You* to live holier Lives than other People? *That* was the Point in view; but he seems to have quite forgot it; or, I rather believe, he did not forget it, but knew not how to *infer* it from *such* Premises as have no manner of Connection with it. He may truly be said to have *taken hold* (as, I think, he somewhere speaks) *of this Topic*, and to have *seized* it for his Use, though it happens to be of no use to him. I dare say, it did not *offer* itself to *his*, nor would to the Mind of *any other Man*, who should set himself to think about these Matters. 'Tis pretty plain, our *Impositions* are here introduced, not to enforce upon your People a more eminent Holiness of Life, which he saw they were no way fit for; but only to shew them (as he had before observed ^d) it would not be

^d P. 138.

improper, now and then, to do) “ some Reason
 “ (such as it is) why they separate from the public
 “ Worship of the Parish.”

You have another Obligation to a strict and holy Life, taken from the Characters of the *old Puritans*. And I am ready to allow there is some Propriety and Pertinency in setting before you their Examples, whose Children and Followers you *pretend* to be: only the following their Examples should not have been urged in the gross, and without proper Distinctions. For some of them were very unruly, disorderly, and seditious Men; while others, 'tis true, had a good Character for their blameless Lives, Strictness in Religion, and for their quiet and peaceable Behaviour; and, I will add, (what I wish, Sir, you would be pleased to consider) for making a Conscience of separating from the Church for every thing they happened to dislike in it. When you follow them in *this*, which is the *main* thing, as you do in some other of their Sentiments, *they* shall be then called *your* Fathers, and *you* shall be called *their* Children. But till then, I cannot agree to it.

I would also own your *Obligation* supposed to arise from the peculiar *Advantages* in Matters of Religion, you are here pretended to enjoy above the Members of the Church, if I was *satisfied* of those Advantages. But indeed I am *not*; and therefore shall farther attend your Author, to let you see, if I can, that you are not possessed of any such *peculiar Advantages* as *he* supposes you to be.

If all these Advantages had been supposed to arise from the *peculiar Circumstances and Situations* of Dissenters, it would hardly have been worth while, nor should I have had any thought of contesting them. But it is a different Case, when they are said to arise out of the *very Doctrines and Points in Con-*

troverſy between us; for, *then*, the Church is interested in the Cause: And much more, when it is pretended, as it is here, that the Doctrines and Institutions of the Church are not only *less profitable* and *edifying*, *not so well fitted* for the Improvement of Men in Religion and Increase of Piety among them, but are *positively destructive* of these things, and *naturally tend* to turn Men away from Holiness of Life. *Then* the Imputation rises higher, and calls loudly for some Animadversion and Reproof.

He begins thus: *You [Dissenters] are not in so much danger of taking up with the outward Forms of Religion, instead of the inward Power and more spiritual Parts of it, as your Neighbours may be.*—He then instances—*You are in no such danger of mistaking Baptism for inward and real Regeneration, as those who are educated in the Established Church; to which unhappy and dangerous Mistake the Office of Baptism in the Church of England has been thought to give too much Countenance.*—It matters not much what *has been thought* by some People. Their Thoughts about many things are so unaccountable, that there is danger of *their* mistaking almost every thing. And I must wonder a little at your Author, that he should poorly take up with saying, the Office of Baptism *has been thought* to give Countenance to such unhappy and dangerous Mistakes, when he would not himself venture, upon his own Judgment, to fix such a Charge upon it. However, he cites the Places in the Office of Baptism which *have been thought* to give them Countenance; as where the Child is said after its Baptism to be *regenerated, and grafted into the Body of Christ's Church*; and, again, to be *regenerated with God's Holy Spirit*. Will it then be denied, that a baptized Christian is regenerated? Is he not *born again*? And *being born again*, in the figurative Scripture Sense,

Sense, what is it more or less, than being put into a new State? And is not this done to every Christian at his Baptism? Nay, does not the Scripture use the very Term we are speaking of to express his Entrance, by Baptism, into this new State? As in those Words of our Saviour to *Nicodemus*, *Except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*; and those of *St. Paul*, which run parallel with them, *We are saved by the washing of Regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost*. For my part, I am rather of opinion, that we are regenerated *only* in Baptism; and that Scripture and Antiquity so appropriate the Word, as to exclude any Conversion, that does not accompany Baptism, from being signified by that Name. The twenty-seventh Article of the Church of *England*, expressly teaches, that *Baptism is the Sign of Regeneration or new Birth*. And the *Directory* itself says the same thing. For, there, the Minister is ordered to instruct the People at Baptism, *that it is a Seal of the Covenant of Grace; of our ingrafting into Christ, and of our Union with him; of Remission of Sins, Regeneration, Adoption, and Life eternal*. And he is ordered to pray—*that God would join the inward Baptism of his Spirit with the outward Baptism of Water; make this Baptism to the Infant a Seal of Adoption, Remission of Sin, Regeneration, and eternal Life*.—This, I suppose, is true and wholesome Doctrine in the *Directory*; in the *Articles of the Church*, tolerable; but, in its Offices, I perceive, it is false and exceeding dangerous. But how comes this about? How is it, that the same Doctrine, which in the *Directory* and the *Articles* is inoffensive, is so offensive and scandalous in its *Liturgy*? Why, Sir, the Case is plain. The *Directory* these Gentlemen approve; the *Articles* they are forced to subscribe, and therefore *must not be seen to contradict*;

tradict; but they don't subscribe the *Liturgy*; and so, may be as free with *that* as they please.

But, I suppose, his Quarrel with the Office of Baptism is for its countenancing, or *being thought* to countenance what he calls a *real and inward Regeneration*. But, if he means by *that* the Renovation of Mind and Spirit to real Holiness, by the Operation of the Holy Ghost, at the Time of Baptism, actually *effected and completed*; let him know, the Church of *England* does not assert or countenance, in new born Infants, any such thing. They are, indeed, declared, after Baptism, to be *regenerated by God's Holy Spirit*; but that *may* only signify their being born again, or put into a new State by Baptism, which is the *Appointment* of the Spirit. For you must observe, Sir, the several Offices and Administrations of the Gospel are attributed to the Spirit, and represented as his Ordinances and Appointments. But to say nothing of *this*: There is doubtless in Baptism a real Efficacy *towards* the Renovation of Mind and Life. For, if the Holy Ghost, who is the great Agent in this Work, the Principle of future Newness and Holiness of Life, which will certainly produce, when the Infant is grown up, actual Holiness, provided a wrong Education, evil Habits and Examples, and other things, do not hinder: If, I say, the Holy Spirit of Grace is given in Baptism (which, I suppose, we have on all hands agreed it to be) I cannot see why it should be thought an *unwarrantable* and *dangerous*, or so much as an *improper* thing, to pray that the baptized *may be*, or to declare that he *is* regenerated thereby: As a Field *properly may*, and is commonly called Wheat, or any other Grain, though it be *newly* sown, and nothing *is yet*, nor is it certainly known, whether any thing like a Crop *will ever* come up.

I perceive, the Danger, which your Author apprehends from the Church's asserting Regeneration by Baptism, is this, that, if the baptized believes he is by Baptism regenerated, he will, of course, believe he shall infallibly be saved. But vain are his Fears! this and every Benefit besides conferred in Baptism being to be lost by a wicked Life; and the Members of the Church being constantly so *taught* and so *believing*, notwithstanding *his* Insinuations of the contrary. You shall have his Words; and then judge what Reason he has for them. *I readily grant*, says he, *that many of the Ministers of the Church and the wiser Christians do know and believe, that there is no such inward Grace and Salvation really communicated by Baptismal Water.* At first reading, perhaps, you will think this a *gracious* and *charitable* Concession. But read it again, consider it, and observe, if you please, the *Implications*? Are they not plainly *these*? That the Ministers of the Church are *divided* in their Opinions about this Matter; that *many*, or, as it should rather seem, *most* of them, and all the Christians that are not of the *wiser* Sort, are of this Belief, *that Grace and Salvation are really communicated by the Baptismal Water.*—Communicated too *by* the Baptismal Water! that is, surely, by some *physical* Causality in the Water; for that, it should seem, is the Opinion he would fasten upon them; whereas they believe, whatever is communicated is *by* the Holy Spirit, only in the use of the Water, according to God's Appointment. And then again, *really* communicated! which, one would think, is meant to insinuate, what would have been too daring to assert, that they think them *so* communicated that they can never be lost. And indeed, if he does not mean *that*, what he says is nothing to the purpose. Do you, Sir, now, or let any one else judge, if this Ac-

cusation be not *weak*, as well as *groundless*. The Gentleman complains, *the Church has put in no Caution and Guard against this fatal Mistake, which its Members may so easily run into*. I doubt it has many, if Expressions implying the contrary to this Mistake may be called *Guards* and *Cautions* against it. But as to *formal express Cautions* against it, I really think there is no occasion for them. It is indeed proper to give the People frequent Cautions against resting in the outward Performances of Religion, such as Fasting, Praying, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; because many really *are apt to do that*. But few, I believe, or none rest their Hopes of Salvation upon the mere Privilege of their Baptism. And it is a doubt with me, whether this Writer can name, or ever knew in his Life any one Member of the Church, who seriously believed he should be saved, be his Life what it would, merely because this Sacrament had passed upon him; who had taken up this Belief from the Offices of the Church, and made it the Occasion and Encouragement of his persevering in Wickedness of Life.

He goes on, and pushes the Matter yet farther. *The Answer in the Catechism, which Children are taught, does but too much confirm and establish them in this Mistake*. Therein they are taught to say, that *in their Baptism they were made Members of Christ, Children of God, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven*. And he supposes their Parents, hearing *this*, will encourage them to believe, that the Case being so, they are born again as much as they need be, and shall certainly be saved. I must here, again, make a doubt, and put it to his Conscience, whether he ever knew any Parents who have taught their Children this Lesson. 'If any have, they must have done it in open contradiction to those
better

better Lessons they and their Children both are constantly taught at Church. They are taught *there*, that these Titles do really denote no more than the common Privileges of professed and baptized Christians; that they do not import any such Change, actually wrought in the Powers of their Souls, and the Course of their Lives, as *You* commonly call Regeneration or new Birth; and much less imply any Certainty of their Salvation.

As to the first of these Characters or Titles, *viz.* *a Member of Christ*, the vulgar sort of Dissenters always speak, nay, in truth, this Author himself speaks of him, in the Book I am now considering, p. 41. as one *who is a Saint, in a State of Grace, and renewed to Faith and Holiness; and as made such, not (as some have imagined) by the Water of Baptism, but by the Operation of the Word and Spirit of God on the Heart, and by diligent Attendance on all the appointed Means and Methods of converting Grace.*— But we are taught and believe he is only a Member of *Christ's* mystical Body, or the Church, (*for we are all baptized into one Body*) and as a Member of *Christ*, or of his Church, may be, at the same time, (unless *St. Paul* too be unhappily and dangerously mistaken) a *Member of a Harlot*, that is, a notorious and grievous Sinner, so he is never the nearer Heaven for being dignified with this glorious Title. — In like manner, *a Child of God* is a Title always appropriated by Dissenters to the *Godly*. But it stands for no more in the Catechism than it does in many Places of Scripture, that is, for one who is taken or adopted by Baptism into the Family of God (*for, says St. Paul, ye are all the Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus.*) But then there are Children of the Kingdom, who for being rebellious shall be cast into utter Darkness. And if they are *Children*, as the Apostle argues,

E then

26 *A Letter concerning the Lives of*

then Heirs. But the Inheritance may be forfeited. Thus, you see, the whole Ground of all this Confusion and Mistake is your accustoming yourselves to the Use of these Phrases either in an *unscriptural* Sense, or in *only one* of the Scripture Senses, the straitest and most limited; while the Catechism uses them in the most extensive one. You apply them to those, and only those, whom you believe to be in a State of Grace and Salvation, which they cannot fall from; and then the Church is presently censured as erroneous, for applying them to all visible, baptized Christians. But the Error is your own; wholly arising from your Misapplication of Scripture Language. And let any one judge, if it be not fitter you should correct your Phraseology, than that the Church should alter her public Forms, which are perfectly agreeable to Scripture Language, to make them accord with it.

You say, the forementioned Titles are too *high* and *august* to be given *indiscriminately* to all baptized Christians. — But Mr. Baxter did not think so. For he says in express Words^a, that a Person professing the Christian Faith, or the Infant of such, is, by Baptism, solemnly entred a visible Member of Christ, and his Church, a pardoned regenerate Child of God, and an Heir of Heaven. And therefore, that it is not unfit that the Minister call him so, supposing only, that, in foro Ecclesiæ, he were the due Subject of Baptism. And the Commissioners at the Savoy Conference, of whom he was one, who peck't at every thing, and made it their business to find Difficulties where there were none, only proposed, in the manner of the Expression, some Alteration, as, that the Child should answer, that, in Baptism,

^a *Christian Directory*, p. 690.

he was, not *made a Member of Christ, &c. but visibly admitted into the number of the Members of Christ, the Children of God, and the Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven.* An Alteration, as one would think, for Alteration's sake, both evidently meaning the same thing. So that, it seems to me that the Pretence of Danger from teaching Children this Lesson was but a late Thought, suggested, probably, at first, to your Writers, by the affected Dialect of your People, before mentioned, and by their Help become so current and popular among us.

But now, Sir, as to the danger of teaching Children, that have been duly Baptized, that the forementioned Titles are really *theirs*, pray consider, that *it seemed good to the Holy Ghost* to give them those Titles, before we did. And will you presume to say, that the Words, which the Holy Ghost uttered, have a natural Tendency to lead Men into a false Security, to make them rest in external Privileges, and conclude that without Holiness they may be saved? No, Sir: Such high Privileges and Honours conferred on all visible Christians naturally tend, as they were certainly meant, to promote quite other Purposes, and some of them *the very reverse* of these. They tend to exalt the Goodness of God, and the Grace of the Gospel, whereby we are invested with them. They naturally suggest our Duty and Obligation to live so as those Privileges, and Dignities, and such an honourable Relation to God and *Christ* require; and shew us the Danger of living otherwise, as it will render our Fall the more dreadful, and we shall be thereby *thrown down*, and sink deeper into Hell, for being thus *exalted into Heaven*. These are the proper and natural Uses to be made of our being adorned with such Privileges and Honours: And these our People

are constantly taught to make of it. And they are never like to make any other, not to be sure *that* which your Author apprehends ; at least, if he and his Brethren, by pretending they *justly may*, do not *shew them the way* to do it.

I see it number'd among your Advantages, that *you are freed from the Inventions of Men and the Incumbrance of human Ceremonies in divine Worship*. Truly, Sir, our People are not much incumber'd with human Ceremonies. For in the ordinary daily Service there is not *one*, legally enjoined, unless *Kneeling* at Prayer be a Ceremony ; and if it be, I don't see why *standing* should not be accounted such. Be it as it will, the Church surely must have as good a Right to impose *Kneeling* in the public Worship upon her Members, as you and other Dissenters have to *impose* it upon your Children and Servants in your Family Devotions. If *ever* a Ceremony may be used in divine Worship, it should, methinks, rather be in *that* which is *public*, than in *private* Worship. But if you think otherwise, you may, if you please, come to Church, and behave there (as your People commonly do, whenever they *do* come among us) *with as little Ceremony* as you do at Meeting. And you had much better do so, than live in your present unwarrantable Separation from it.

Two or three of these Ceremonies he desires he may be permitted to mention ; by which, one would think, he meant to insinuate, he could have named, if he had pleased, twenty or thirty, but would only decimate them, in his great Clemency. The first of them is *the Sign of the Cross at Baptism*. This, it seems, according to this Gentleman, is a great Incumbrance to our People. But *how* are *they* incumber'd with it ? None but the Minister has any concern in it ; and he, I fancy, neither
finds

finds nor thinks it to be any Incumbrance at all. But I wonder most at his way of talking, as if it were your peculiar Happiness, for which you are to bless yourselves, that you have not *had that Figure made upon your Foreheads, nor* (as he is pleased to express himself) *passed under it.* Why, Sir, do you think it would have done you any harm, if you had? Had it been your fortune to have received your Baptism at Church, and *passed there under the Figure of the Cross,* do you conceive it would have made you a worse Christian? And if not, with what Reason are these Questions put to the Consciences of your People? — *Do you remember a crucified Saviour, and let him dwell upon your Thoughts more than they do who make use of it? Are you more courageous and manful in the Profession of the Gospel, in a dangerous Hour? Are you less ashamed to confess the Faith of Christ crucified?* — Is this, Sir, reasonably expected? Could not he be content with your being *as* mindful of a crucified Saviour, *as* courageous in confessing the Gospel, but you must be *more* so? And was it not enough, if you were *as* little ashamed to confess the Faith of *Christ* crucified, but you must be *less* ashamed of it? The putting these Questions to your Consciences plainly supposes the Sign of the Cross to be *operative*, to have a bad Influence and Effect upon the future Life, an invisible Power to make one *afraid* to profess the Faith of *Christ* crucified, *unmindful* of his Cross, or *ashamed* of it. So that, instead of making it a Sacrament, or a Means whereby we receive the Grace of God, which we are groundlessly charged with doing, *he* makes it (if I may call it so) an *Anti-sacrament*, or a Means whereby we are *deprived* of that Grace. In doing of which *he* is guilty of as great and unwarrantable Presumption, as we *should have been* in doing of the other, having no more

Authority

Authority to make a Sign of human Invention a means to *stop and obstruct*, than we have to make it a means to *convey* divine Grace.

The next Ceremony (as he calls it, though, surely, not with his usual Correctness) is *the Institution of Godfathers and Godmothers*. And a Man would wonder which way this Institution is any *hindrance* to a holy and godly Life. Can you, Sir, I desire to know, imagine *how*? One would really think, if they did no *good*, they could not, possibly, do any *harm*; and that, if they did nothing, as we were growing up, towards *leading us on in the Ways of God*, they would not, however, *turn us away* from them.

Indeed, he tells you, *You are ready to imagine that the Promises of these Sureties arise so high, as to give Parents too much Indulgence and Excuse for their own personal Neglect of the Instruction of the Child*. Where, again, I cannot but admire his Discretion. For, as he had said before, the Office of Baptism *has been thought* to give countenance to a certain Error, while he would not, himself, say it does; so now, instead of saying, the Promises of the Sureties *do* rise so high, he only says, *You are ready to imagine* that they do. And yet this Expression, wary as it is, is so contrived as to beget in the Reader's Mind a Belief that the thing *is* so, as much as if he had positively asserted it.—That the common sort of Dissenters have such an *Imagination* is true enough. I have found it in all whom I have ever conversed with upon this Subject: And it is one of their heaviest Charges, and loudest Outcries against the Church, that it obliges Godfathers and Godmothers to make such Promises in behalf of the Infant, as neither they, nor any Man living, can ever be sure it will perform. And when they are desired to shew us any such Promises, we are always referred

to the Sureties Answers to the Baptismal Interrogatories, made by *them* in the Child's Name. These Answers seem to be grossly mistaken for so many Promises made by the Sureties, in their *own* Names, concerning the future Faith and Practice of the Child, as if they engaged thereby (for instance) that when it is grown up, it actually *shall* believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith, that it *shall* renounce the Devil, and all his Works, and *shall* also obediently keep God's Commandments: Whereas the Church considers these Answers as the *Child's* Answers, only made by its Representatives. They contain *its* Part of the baptismal Covenant or Contract, which because, by reason of its tender Age, it cannot, itself, utter, is to be uttered by its Sureties. And that this is so, is plain from the Address which the Minister directs to the Godfathers and Godmothers, immediately before the Interrogatories, where he says to them, *This Infant must faithfully, for his part, promise by you, that are his Sureties (until he come of Age to take it upon himself) that he will renounce, &c.* And the Priest's Exhortation to the Sureties after Baptism begins thus, *Forasmuch as this Child has promised by you his Sureties, to renounce the Devil, and all his Works, to believe in God, and to serve him, &c.* And that the Sureties are, by the Church, considered, in this Affair, no otherwise, than as the *Mouth of the Child*, is yet plainer, from the third Question and the Answer thereto, *Wilt thou be baptized in this Faith? That, (say the Sureties) is my Desire.* It is evident, from the very Nature of the Subject, this is the Child's Answer, and so are all the rest. And accordingly, in the Baptism of such as are of riper Years, and able to answer for themselves, the Priest addresses the Persons themselves that are to be baptised, in this Manner, *Ye*
must

must faithfully for your part promise, in the Presence of these your Witnesses, and this whole Congregation, that ye will renounce, &c. and then he demands of each, severally, the Baptifimal Questions, which they, in their own Persons, return Answers to.— You see, Sir, here are no Promises and Engagements which any, besides the Child, are supposed to enter into, and to be bound by. And, if you will only please to give yourself the Trouble to read over the Office of public Baptism, you will not find, I do assure you, any Promises or Stipulations at all made by the Sureties in their own Names, (I mean any that are explicit.) They do indeed receive from the Minister an Exhortation, or Charge, concerning the Christian Education of the Child; and, by standing there to receive it, they are *justly supposed* to accept it. But this Charge, or Promise (if we will call it so) does not run so high, as to give the Parents any colourable Pretence for neglecting their Duty of bringing up their Child in the Fear of God. It does not bring upon the Sureties the Trouble and Expence of its Education, any more than of its Maintenance; but only lays them under an Obligation to see, that it be taught what a solemn Vow, Promise, and Profession it had made by them, to call upon it to hear Sermons, to learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the ten Commandments, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his Soul's Health. They are to see that the Infant be taught the Nature and Obligation of its Baptifimal Covenant; that is, to have the Oversight of those that are to teach it. When one employs another to see that some particular Work be done as it ought, or when he appoints a Trustee to his Will, to see that it be duly executed, no body construes this to mean, that the Party so entrusted was to do the Work, or execute the Will, himself,

himself, but only to *superwise* those that are to *do*, and *execute* it. In like manner, the Charge delivered to the Sureties, and their Obligation to *see* that the Child be taught, is to be understood, as only importing an Obligation upon them to take a general *Overfight* of the Christian Part of its Education, to stir up the Parents, if there be need, to provide it for them ; to admonish them, if they neglect to do it ; and to take, themselves, all fitting Opportunities to put the Child in mind of its own Duty. Is this the Way for Parents to *get discharged* from their Obligations to instruct their own Children ? May they *neglect* their Instruction, because they have provided Sureties, who are to admonish and reprove them for such Neglect ? No Parent, I fancy, is so weak as to reason, upon the Case, after this manner.—I have, in my time, dealt with many Churchmen for not bringing up their Children in a more Christian manner than they did ; yet never met with one, in my whole Life, who pleaded this in excuse for his Neglect, either in jest or earnest. No, Sir ; every body knows, the Church does not mean, by the Appointment of Sureties, to take off from the Parents any Part of *their* Duty, but only to *supply* their *Negligences* and *Defects*, and make up, in some measure, what may be wanting in *their* Care. And is not the Church, do you think, securer of the religious Education of its young Members, by such a Provision, than if the Matter was left to the Consciences only of the Parents, some of whom, you know, are extremely *ignorant* of the Christian Religion, some *heretical* in their Opinions, and others *vicious* in their Lives, and so *cannot* teach them, or will teach them *wrong*, or not *think at all about teaching them* the Ways of God ?

There is little doubt, but the Case of Children of very *ignorant*, very *vicious*, or *heretical* Parents coming to Baptism, often happens among Dissenters, as well as in the Church. When such Cases happen among *you*, I desire to know what *is to be*, what commonly *is*, done? Are such Children to be baptized without any Promises or Stipulations at all for their Christian Education? Or are they to be baptized upon the Stipulations of *such* Parents, which, at the same time, you own, nay, contend, are not fit to be taken by the Church? Or must they remain unbaptized till they come to Years of Discretion, and can answer for themselves, or till their Parents think fit to sue for their Baptism in the Church? This indeed is sometimes done, to my certain Knowledge; and even *now*, the *very Day* I am writing this, (so it happens) I have a Case of this sort brought before *me*. In these Cases, surely, it is much better they should be brought to Baptism, upon the Promises and Stipulations of some serious Persons, such as the Church requires those who undertake this Office should be. In *other things*, we can easily perceive the Advantage of such *double additional* Securities: And, I fancy, Sir, if your Lawyer, or whoever else has the Disposition of your Money, should lend it to every one that *wants*, or *has a mind* to borrow it, rejecting, *as not proper*, all other Securities besides his own, and then go about to make *a Merit* with you of his so doing, you would either think *he* was a very odd *wrong-headed* Man, or that he took *you* to be *such*, and find it high time to put your Affairs into other Hands.

The other Ceremony he mentions, which you, it seems, are happily freed from, *is kneeling at the Lord's Supper*. And of this he goes on talking just in the way he had done before of the Cross at Baptism,

Baptism, and some other Matters, demanding of those, “ who scruple and renounce that Posture, “ that they be *more* penitent and self-abased under “ the Sense of their Sins, *more* thankful for the “ condescending Love of *Jesus*, and that they “ adore God and the Saviour with a *warmer* Zeal, “ and *more* contrite Spirit, than those that practise “ it.” Another, who might be disposed to cavil, and take all Advantages, would hardly fail to lay hold of so fair a Handle as this Gentleman has here given, to charge him with *Quietism* : For, surely, these Passages have an Air of it ; the very Essence thereof consisting in some *high Acts of Contemplation or Adoration*, without any *outward Expression* of them, which (say your *Quietists*) is very hurtful to them, and ought to be avoided and removed, that it may not hinder them. But, for *my* part, I don’t think he had any intention to recommend or countenance that pernicious Doctrine ; and do verily believe he meant *nothing worse*, than *discrediting* the Church, by making your manner of receiving the Sacrament (as he seems resolved to make *every thing else*, let it be what it will, wherein you differ from *us*) a just Ground for demanding of your People greater Devotion in the use of it. But is not this Demand a little extravagant ? *The more inward Devotion, the less of it you outwardly express, and the shyer you are of shewing it !* Is not this quite *unnatural*, and therefore *unreasonable* to expect ? Whoever considers Nature, would rather expect to find a greater degree of inward Devotion, where he observes, in the Gestures of the Body, a greater outward Appearance of it ; not only, because the devout Gestures of the Body *naturally do*, and therefore *probably will* excite and stir up in the Mind something of Devotion, where there was none before, and heighten it where it was ; but

also, because where-ever there is in the Mind and Heart a great degree of it, it will naturally shew itself in devout and reverential Gestures, and is not kept from it, without some difficulty.

Another of your Advantages, according to this Author is, *You are not confined to set Forms of Prayer, and a perpetual Repetition of them, in your public Worship, which are apt* (he says) *to introduce into Devotion, Formality, Coldness, and Indifferency of Spirit*; and he brings, as Witnesses of this Truth, some of yourselves, who, *after attending divine Service at Church, have much complained that their Hearts were apt to grow dull, negligent, and drowsy, under this uniform and constant rehearsal of the same returning Forms and Phrases.* This being told as a Matter of Fact, I shall not dispute the Truth of it, and shall only tell you of another Fact, which is as true, that some of *us*, having been at divine Worship among *you*, have been as drowsy over a long, uniform, continued Prayer, though it was quite new, or have been kept wakeful by mere *Indignation* and *Disdain* at the Meanness, the vain Repetitions, the weak and wandring Thoughts, to say nothing worse of it. As to those who complained of their growing dull and negligent in divine Service at Church, I cannot but wonder at them, because the *Forms and Phrases* of our Prayers must be, to *them*, pretty new, whatever they are to *our own* People; as new, I doubt, as *the Forms and Phrases* of those Prayers, which they hear in their own Assemblies. Therefore, I think, it cannot be, that the Coldness and Indifferency of their Spirits should be owing to the *continual Repetition* of them; but it must be owing to another Cause; and that I suspect to be some *Aversion* they had before-hand conceived to them. Were they not taught, from their Infancy, both to *despise* and *hate* them? And if so,
what

what wonder if they were *negligent* at them? Did they go to them with any real Design to *join* in them, and *offer them up* to God as their *own*, and not rather with an obstinate and sullen Resolution to have *no Part and Concern* in them? And if *this* were the Case, well might Drowsiness creep upon them. I fancy, Sir, if you were to make the Experiment but a while, you would find them otherwise affecting, than these People (it seems) did. The reading of the Scriptures, which makes a considerable Part of the Church Service, would be, I presume, no Weariness to *you*: And if the Prayers, the Psalms of *David*, the *Te Deum*, and other Hymns, and the ten Commandments, solemnly pronounced, which God spake from the top of Mount *Sinai*, with *Thunders, and Lightnings, and the Voice of the Trumpet, exceeding loud, so that all the People in the Camp trembled*; if these (I say) should *rock you asleep*, I seriously profess, I should wonder at you. Let me intreat you, then, to make the trial; and if you do, I desire, as I justly may, you will comply with my Request in two things; one is, that you divest yourself of any *unreasonable Prejudice*, if there be any, you may have entertained against the Liturgy; the other, that you be *conformable* to the Rules of it, and behave as other devout Men and Women do. Make your humble Confession to Almighty God, and offer up the Prayers, *meekly kneeling upon your Knees*. Add your hearty *Amen* to each of them. Lift up your Heart, and raise your Voice in the alternate reading the Psalms of *David*. There is no pious and devout Person among *us*, I dare venture to say, but has experienced the Fitness of reading them *so*, to raise Devotion, and can truly say,

—oft th' alternate Chaunt

Of sacred Song wakens my highest Raptures.

Join

Join, with an audible Voice too, in all the *Responses*, which, though some of the ruder Sort among you have, in their way, ridiculed, are highly approved and commended by ^a one of the greatest of your own Writers, who rightly observes, that *the Use of the Tongue keeps awake the Mind, and stirs up God's Graces in his Servants; and that it was the Decay of Zeal in the People that first shut out the Responses.* These Responses, I am satisfied, alienate the Minds of many of your People from the Liturgy, as much, or, perhaps, more, than any thing else in it. The *Noise and Babbling* of them, (as they are wont to call it) is, it seems, very uncouth and offensive to them. And if a Quaker were to come into *your* Meetings, the *Noise and Bawling* (as he, doubtless, would call it) of your *Psalmody*, would be as offensive to *him*. The reason of both is plain; neither *he*, nor *you*, have any thing like those things, in that way of Worship you were brought up in, and have been always accusom'd to. But if you would only resolve to shake off the Prejudices of Education, and disengage your Minds from that Power and Force, which Custom has upon 'em, if you would come to our Churches, and *prevail with yourselves* to bring your Common Prayer Books along with you, and, when you are there, help to make yourselves, some Part of the *Noise* of these *Responses*, you would certainly find it no *Offence*, but a *Pleasure* to you; and I assure myself, the whole Service of the Church would appear to you otherwise affecting, than, possibly, you now think it to be.

If you still think the Variation of the Phrase is such a *mighty* matter, let us try it, if you please, in one or two Instances. We in the Confession of our Sins to Almighty God, constantly say, *We have*

^a Baxter's *Christ, Direct.* p. 856. and *Cure of Ch Divis.* p. 188.

offended against thy holy Laws: You, perhaps, say at one time, *We have despised thy Commandments*; at another time, *We have committed Iniquity*; and, at a third, *We have done amiss, and dealt very wickedly. We sue for Pardon and Restoration to the Divine Favour, saying, Restore thou them that are penitent: You, it may be, say now, Forgive us all our Sins which we truly and sincerely repent of. Then, We confess our Wickedness, and are sorry for our Sin, do thou forgive it*; and the next time, perhaps, use other Words of the same Import, returning, after a proper time, to the first Expressions; which I take to be one of the great Secrets of *Extempore Prayer*. Is it now possible for you to think, that the Attention of any *serious* Man will depend upon his using, *constantly*, one of those Forms, or *interchangeably*, the *other*? If it be so, it is a Sign he is not much wearied with the Burthen of his Sins, nor very solicitously concerned about the Forgiveness of them.

You will ask, perhaps, if I should not, *myself*, be weary of a Sermon, though it were ever so good, *a hundred times repeated*? To be sure, Sir, I should; but then, the Cases are widely different: I should be weary of a *Sermon* so often repeated, because, being stale, I should be no longer *entertained* with it; or, because, having so often heard it, it would *teach* me nothing *now*, but what it had *taught* me *long*, and *many times, before*: But, when I go to Prayers, I do not propose to myself *Entertainment*, or *Information and Instruction*, as your People, generally, seem to do: They seem to regard a Prayer with the *same sort of Attention* they do a Sermon, and they expect from the *one* the *same sort of Instruction* or *Entertainment* that they look for from the *other*; which the perpetual Repetition of the same Prayer not affording, they are disgusted at it,
and

and naturally fall into a drowsy Inattention to it: Whereas, if they would lay aside all Expectation of having their Judgments *informed*, or their Imaginations *entertained and diverted* by the Prayers of the Church, and look for nothing in them, besides a Representation of the real Wants and Desires of a Christian to Almighty God, in proper and suitable Expressions, the frequent rehearsal of them would not be such a Weariness, and they would join in them with great Devotion and Delight.

I am pretty sure I have not injured them, by supposing they apply themselves to a Prayer as they do to a Sermon, and expect the same sort of Edification from it. Some I have known, who have *frankly confessed* as much, that *they* go not to Church to pray; *that*, said they, is the *Minister's* Business, and *ours* is to *mind* him, and *listen attentively* to him: And if any Man, of tolerable Discernment, will but attend your Meetings, observe the Countenances, and mark the Behaviour of the devoutest among you, he will plainly perceive, they are no otherwise employed in time of Prayer, than in Sermon-time; except, perhaps, that, once in a while, he may discover in them some Emotion, or some short transient Aspiration unto God, when any particular Matter, or Expression, impresses their Minds more than ordinarily. On the other hand, you shall observe the devoutest Members of the Church upon their Knees, with uplifted Hands and Eyes, presenting, vocally or mentally, before God, every Petition (I take as this Author supposes it to be) as properly, and as ardently also, as the Minister himself, his Soul hanging, if I may so speak, continually upon God, as the Souls and Eyes of the People do, in your Assemblies, in time of Prayer, upon the Lips of the Minister. This is the difference between *your* Devotion and *ours*, and this the
boasted

boasted *Advantage* you have above us, by not being confined to the perpetual Repetition of a set Form of Words.

But, before I leave the Subject, I would desire to observe two things; and they are both suggested by your Author. He^a elsewhere recommends, in some Cases, Forms of Prayer for private or Family-Devotion, supposing they may be used *there*, without Deadness and Formality of Spirit. And, if *there*, why not, I ask, *in the Church*? Then, he confesses, that an Aversion to Forms of Prayer is the Occasion of much Neglect of Family-Prayer^b. There are many, who, being bred up in the Hatred of all Forms, and not knowing how to pray without them, have gone on, to the end of their Lives, without Prayer, or any appearance of Religion, in their Houses, which they would not otherwise have done.

You have the Choice of your own Ministers: You are not confined to sit under such Teachers as some rich Patron shall provide for you. Why, are they like to be the worse for being provided by a rich Patron? I hope not; and am ready to think you, Sir, if you were Patron of a Church, would provide for it as well as you would have done, if you had not been Master of *one* of those *many* thousands you possess. But, perhaps, the Word *rich* came in here unawares, without any design to set a *Mark* upon the *Rich*, as ill Patrons. I will suppose it to be so; and that the Grievance meant is no more than their being provided by a *single* Patron, and the People's being obliged to sit under those whom he has provided to be set over them. But, to my Apprehension, it is much at one, if they are forced to

^a *Guide to Prayer*, p. 155. *Humble Attempt*, p. 226.

^b *Ibid.*

fit under such as *two or three*, or (suppose) *half a dozen* of the *richest* Members of the Church, and *principal Contributors*, shall provide, and bring in upon them: Which, I believe, is commonly the Case, especially in Country Places, a few leading Men, on any Vacancy, looking out for a fit Person to be their new Minister, the rest, generally, acquiescing, much as they do in the Parishes.

But, as you have a Power to choose, so you have to dismiss your Ministers. Yet, I have heard of some, who did not care to accept their Call, upon that footing, and wanted Security for quiet and peaceable Possession, a certain Term of Years. But these Gentlemen, it is like, did not see the Inconsistency of *this* with the avowed Principle of the Separation, that the People have a Right, of which they cannot be deprived, both to chuse, and *dismiss* their Ministers, at pleasure. I should be also glad to be informed, how they reconcile this Principle with their Church Covenant. This Covenant, I thought, had obliged them, Minister and People, to walk together in all the special Ordinances of the Gospel, in such manner, as that it should be held, afterwards, unlawful for them to leave their Place, and forsake his Ministry, without being regularly dismissed by him. And, if so, what is become of their unalienable Right to *choose* and *dismiss* their Pastors? And yet, as inconsistent as these things seem to be, it is ten to one, but one of these covenanting Pastors, if he were writing a Book to set forth his *Plain Reasons for Dissenting from the Church of England, or counting up the Advantages you enjoy, above us, towards your better Edification, and greater Increase in Piety*; I say, it is a great chance, if he did not tell you of your being allowed
to

to choose, and dismiss again, your Ministers, as one of the choicest of those Advantages, which you should bless yourselves, and be thankful to God for.

Your Author says, *You can dismiss your Ministers, if they be scandalously immoral.* And cannot we too? Is there no Way provided in the Church to get rid of *such*? And, till that is done, or if it be *never* done, cannot any Parishioner leave his Church, and go to another, which is, in effect, dismissing him? And, if this be done in a modest and peaceable manner, without Noise and Clamour, and a schismatical Spirit, no body is like to *blame* him much, or go about to *hinder* him. You can dismiss them too, *If they be known to fall into dangerous Errors, and will publish them, in opposition to the common Sentiments of the People.* That was *very prudently* put in: For what if the whole People are of the same Sentiments? What if he has corrupted them, or the *leading Men* among them, and has brought them over to his own wicked Errors? Will they dismiss him *then*? Or has any body else, by the Constitution of your Churches, Power and Authority to part them? If they *will* keep him, and *pay* him, pray, who can *hinder* it? Who can remove him, in spite of the People, and put a worthier in his Place, who will teach them the Truth, bring them back from their perverse and dangerous Wanderings, and put them in the right Way to Salvation? And, as to their dismissing him *for his being thought not so profitable to their Edification*, as they, I suppose, could wish, or as he formerly, perhaps, had been; it is a thing seldom heard of. If he be *Orthodox*, as they call Orthodoxy, and, withal, a *quiet* and *inoffensive* Man, they commonly jog on together for Life, though he be thought to grow a little *dull*, and *less edifying*,

every day. Good-nature, Friendship, a Regard to his Family, and other Considerations of the like sort do, generally, keep them from dismissing him. But what if it happens, that the Congregation is *divided* about *keeping* or *dismissing* him; that the *ruling Part* think *well* of his publick Ministrations, and are for *keeping* him, while the *great Majority*, all of the meaner sort, think otherwise of them, and would have him be dismissed, which, if we consider the various Tastes and Humours of Men, is like to be frequently the Case? If these should think of setting up for themselves, and choosing one who is more to their liking, they would be thought to *walk disorderly*, and infallibly charged with the heinous Sin of making Schisms and Divisions in the Church; of which we have known divers Instances; one, particularly, at *Exeter*, in the Case of the late Mr. *Peirce*. And if, notwithstanding *that*, they should be still of the mind to do it, they might not have Ability to provide him a sufficient Maintenance. Content, therefore, they *must* be, and cannot help themselves, as the Members of the Church, in that Case, easily may. If they fancy *not* the Preaching of their Parish Minister, there are, in most Places, many conformable Clergymen, whom they may like better, very near. And, though running from their own to other Parishes, under Pretence of better Instruction, is not a thing one can *approve* of, or would *encourage*, yet it is commonly *indulged*; and if any one *will* take the Liberty to do it, he *may*, and we cannot help it: Whereas a Dissenter, here in the Country, if he likes not his own Pastor, has commonly no other, at least of the same Denomination, whom he can constantly hear, and join himself to, without intolerable Inconvenience. And as to many, who have neither the Ability, nor the Convenience for travelling many

ny Miles, on the Lord's Day, the thing is quite impracticable.

That we may not be always upon the *Defensve*, I must desire leave to observe, that your Ministers, by being so much, as to their Maintenance and Dismission, in the Power of the People, are under Temptations often, it is to be feared, too strong to let them go on, without Reproof, in wrong and perverse Ways, to indulge them in their Errors, and flatter them in their Vices. In this respect, it will be granted, I hope, the *Advantage* is fairly on *our* Side.

After your Author had said what he thought proper about the Privilege of choosing your own Ministers, he takes Occasion to display, as the great Advantage of that Privilege, the Excellencies of their Preaching, by marking it with three or four Characters, which he seems to think very *distinguishing* ones, and, in a manner, *peculiar* to Dissenters.

They frequently insist upon the peculiar Themes of Christianity, and Divine Revelation. As if no body else did so ! when it is notorious, this is what the Bishops earnestly recommend to their Clergy, and what they, generally, practise, not only in compliance with their Lordships Directions, but from their own Judgments, as a thing fit in itself, and highly necessary in these Times.

The peculiar Themes of Christianity and divine Revelation are the following, at least, the following are some of them ; the Doctrine of Original Sin, or the dismal Consequences of the Fall of *Adam* upon his Posterity, the Necessity of a Redeemer, the miraculous Conception and wonderful Birth of our Redeemer, his admirable Life, his amazing Miracles, his Death and Passion, and Satisfaction thereby, his Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven,
and

and sitting there at the right Hand of God, to make Intercession for us, the Dignity and Excellency, the End and Design of all his Offices, and the Benefits we receive therefrom, Salvation through him alone, his sending the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost on his Apostles, the Inspiration and Perfection of the Holy Scriptures, the Doctrine of the Trinity, or the Divinity of the Son and Holy Ghost, the Reality and Necessity of divine Assistances, the Nature, the Unity, and the Perpetuity of the Catholic Church, and the Communion of Saints in it ; the Nature and Duty of Faith, and the Privileges of the Faithful ; the Nature and End of the Two Sacraments, and the Duty of observing them ; the Doctrine of Repentance and Forgiveness of Sins ; and, in regard to the Things appertaining to the next Life, which have been brought to light through the Gospel, the Resurrection of the Body, the Coming of our Lord *Jesus Christ* to Judgment, and the Life everlasting. These, I think, are the chief of those Doctrines that are more eminently Christian ; but, upon what Grounds any Gentleman can pretend to say, or insinuate, that the Preaching of *these* is the Character, in any peculiar Degree, of your Ministers, I can't readily conceive. A Difference between *our* Preaching and *yours*, in regard to *these* Doctrines, if it lies only in some smaller Degree of more or less, cannot be easily discerned ; and if it could, it would not be a sufficient Ground for such a distinguished Preference of your Preaching as is here intimated to be due to it. Nothing but a *general* and *notorious* Neglect on our Side, can justify such a Preference. And how does it appear there *is* such a Neglect on our Side ? No one, I suppose, has taken the Trouble to get Intelligence or Information of what is preached, on any one Sunday in the Year, in all our Churches and Meetings.

ings. And if any Judgment were to be made of *this*, by the Sermons we have in Print, we should be very willing to abide by it. For my own Part, I can see no Reason for your Preachers assuming to themselves this Character, as peculiarly belonging to *them*, though I have carefully read *many* of their Sermons, and lightly skimm'd over *more*. I am sure, of those that have been published by our Divines, there is scarcely a Volume, wherein divers of *the peculiar Themes of Christianity* before-mentioned are not only *touch'd* upon, but *professedly* handled. And one Way how it comes to be so is *this*. The *Fasts* and *Festivals* of the Church lead *our* Clergy, and, indeed, lay them under a Kind of Necessity of Preaching upon the great Articles and Mysteries of our holy Religion, once a Year. But those solemn Seasons being quite disregarded in *your* Churches, *your* Ministers are neither *obliged* nor *led* to discourse upon, and, for what I know, may think it improper, offensive, and scandalous to meddle with *those* Subjects at *such* Times, as it would have an Appearance of *observing Days, and Months, and Times, and Years*, against the Principles and Custom of your Churches; and hold it best to let them alone till some *other* Time, which, as is usual in such Cases, may happen to be *no* Time. And if those Mysteries *are* treated of, at any time, in *your* Sermons, yet as *your* Ministers are never led by any *particular Call*, or *special Occasion*, to those Subjects, it is most like to be done only incidentally, in a slight and superficial Manner. And I cannot but esteem it one considerable Benefit and Advantage, among divers others, of our keeping the *Feasts* and *Fasts* of the Church, which you have discarded, that *our* People are hereby secured of having the grand Mysteries of our holy Faith more
largely

largely explained, more solidly proved, more frequently inculcated and enforced upon them.

But they not only instruct the Head, they strike the Heart in a powerful and affecting manner. We have no Exception, I assure him, to this Way of Preaching; but when the Preacher has thoroughly convinced the Reason, and captivated the Judgments of his Audience, by clear Evidence and Demonstration of the Truth and Weight of what he delivers, we would have him go on to move and warm their Affections. But as the former Character of Preaching is certainly the more excellent of the two, and that wherein a Deficiency can least be dispensed with, so *that*, I believe, will be allowed by all competent and impartial Judges, to be more peculiarly and eminently the Character of our Preachers, than the *other* is of *yours*. The Generality of both one and t'other have not, I fear, all the Talents (for they are many) that are requisite *to strike the Heart in the most powerful Manner*, and in any degree of Perfection. The Passions and Affections (this Writer knows) are tender and touchy things, and must be approached with all the Address and Delicacy imaginable. You may possibly move the grosser Part of an Audience by an affected Tone, loud Vociferations, violent Agitations of the Body, and by bursting out upon them in a Torrent of Exclamation, though ever so improper and unseasonable. But in others, a little more refined, you will raise no Passion besides Indignation and Disdain, to see your Vanity and Folly, in going about to make yourself Master of their Passions by such ridiculous Ways.

Again, *It is the Excellency of their Ministry, that it leads People to a Sense of their Degeneracy and Ruin by the Fall of Adam; that it teaches them more*
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the Weakness and Impotence of Nature, and the Necessity of Divine Grace. The Doctrine of the Corruption of Nature by the Fall, and the Necessity of the Grace of God, is as much the Doctrine of the Church, and her Clergy, as of Dissenters. And this our Author knows to be so. So that, it is like, he means, they carry them *not so far* as Dissenters do; which may be, generally, true, and they never the worse Guides for that. For he is not, on course, the best, who lays human Nature lowest: There is Danger in *depressing* it too low, as well as in *exalting* it too high. And it will be found, upon thorough Examination, that the established Clergy have well avoided *both* Extremes, and taught the *Necessity of God's Grace*, upon the firmest and soundest Principles.

But *experimental Preaching*, I perceive, is their top Excellence. ^a This he describes by *preaching upon spiritual and inward Subjects, such as the first Awakenings of the Conscience of a Sinner, the Fears of the Wrath of God, which sometimes accompany such Awakenings, the Temptations diverting the Mind from them, the Conflicts of the Spirit in these Seasons, the Cases of the Afflicted, and the Tempted, of those that grow in the things of God, and those that backslide, and decline from those degrees of Piety which they once professed and practised, the false Peace of Presumption, and the Torments of Despair, the Terrors of a wounded, with the Serenities and Consolations of an assured Conscience, the Workings of in-dwelling Sin, the manifold Disguises which it conceals itself under, and the subtle Excuses framed by the Flesh for the Indulgence of it, the way and manner of Regeneration, or new Birth.* It no way appears, that they preach more upon these Subjects than we do. And this Author *himself*, in the midst

^a *Humble Attempt*, p. 44. 171.

of all his glorying in this their way of experimental Preaching, cannot help discovering some Consciousness of their Want of it. *It was (he says) the Fashion and Practice of their Fathers among the Puritans, and hopes it is the present Mode of preaching among them*; but does not venture to affirm it to be so. And indeed how could he, when he knew, and, in another place, had plainly confessed the contrary. In his Dedication of one Volume of his *Sermons on various Subjects, chiefly the inward and spiritual Parts of Godliness*, he observes, that *Treatises on these Subjects are seldom published now-a-days, and therefore he suffered them to take up a larger Share in those Discourses*; and he did it with design to rescue those Arguments from the Charge of Enthusiasm, and to put them in such a Light, as might shew their perfect Consistence with common Sense and Reason. Afterwards, he observes, agreeably to what I had just now quoted from him, out of the Book we are at present considering, that *their Fathers, indeed, talked much of pious Experience, and have left their Writings of the same Strain behind them*; but, he adds, that he mourned to think that some are grown so degenerate, in our days, as to join their Names, and their Works together, in a common Jest, and to ridicule the sacred Matter of their Sermons. He must mean the present Dissenters, or the Opposition between *them* and *their Fathers* is destroyed. So that, you see, he talks in another Strain of their Preaching and Writing, when another Nail was to be driven.

But, it may be, though they enter not *more* into these Subjects, they may be *better qualified*, by their larger Experiences, to enter into them, when they do. I answer: Were they so well *qualified* for it, they would hardly *ridicule* it, as this Author complains they do. And, which way they should come

to be *qualified* for it so much better, and have *larger Experiences* in these Cases than other Folks, I cannot imagine. They have not been observed, that I know of, to be *more* tempted, *more* afflicted, *more* in Circumstances of Despair or Presumption, and so forth, than other Men. Of that there is not the least appearance. And if any have been, or be now, in *some* of the Circumstances above described, they cannot well be in *many*, they cannot possibly be in *all*, or *near* all. For a good part of these Cases are diametrically *opposite* to one another. Mr. Whitfield, indeed, assures us, *He has undergone a Series of Temptations, and continual Buffetings of the Devil, which have, in a high degree, qualified him for the Ministerial Office, in that he has experimentally tried all things, and having suffered every sort of Temptation, can suit his Advice to the different States and Conditions of other People's Souls.* He, belike, young as he is, never preached any thing but what he has experimentally felt himself. But I have not heard that dissenting Ministers pretend, yet, to any such thing. — After all, I must do this Author the Justice to own, he does not directly, and in Terms, say, *this is*, but only talks of it *as if it was* the general Mode of their Preaching. *You expect, you love, you delight,* (says he to the People) *in such sort of Preaching.* That they may do, and yet not *have* it. Yes, perhaps, you will say, if they *like* it, they shall *have* it, because their Preachers are of their own *choosing*. Sir, it does not follow; for, possibly, your Elections of Ministers (like other Elections) may often be carried by Management and Intrigue, or swayed by *Interest*, by special *Friendships*, by *Relation* and *Alliance*, and other Considerations of a like Nature. And if some of your largest and richest Congregations have it in their Power to have such as they *like*, such as they

think the *best* and *ablest* among your Ministers, the rest will be obliged to choose such as *offer themselves*, or such as they can *persuade* to accept their Call, and come and help them, whether they preach thus *christianly*, thus *pathetically*, thus *experimentally*, or not.

He says, *greater Care is taken among you about the Admission to the Lord's Table, and excluding the Vicious from it.* He confesses, that, by the Rules of the Church, scandalous Sinners are not allowed to come to it : Only he says, *These Rules are not observed, and put in Practice, in all Places, as they ought to be.* Well, be it so, that some notorious Offenders, *Schismatics*, for instance, who ought, by the Canons of the Church, to be rejected, have been, sometimes, admitted to Communion : Is it not true too, that some (and that by the Rules of of your Churches, or however by the avowed Principles of your Ministers) are, among *you*, excluded, who ought to have been admitted to it. It is, generally, held among *you*, that the Sacrament is for none but perfect and consummate Christians, such as can give a particular Account of their Conversion, and of the Work of Grace upon their Souls : by which means, not only open and scandalous Offenders, but many who are not wicked, yet in a State of a spiritual Weakness and Imperfection, are kept off from an Ordinance, which would be the Food and Nourishment, the strengthening and refreshing of their Souls.

Lastly, it is numbered among your Advantages, that *your whole Conduct is strictly observed, and your Behaviour watched with a narrow and severe Eye, by many of your Neighbours of the established Church, and especially* (he says) *by those that hate you.* But this Advantage is not peculiar to Dissenters. Whatever it is, Churchmen enjoy it as well as you; for
their

their Conduct and Behaviour is also observed, and severely watched by their dissenting Neighbours, especially *those that hate them*. They cannot, he says, *step awry, but Censure and Reproach attend them*. And if they are guilty of any heinous Crime and Scandal, the whole Profession and Party of Dissenters are loaded with it, a Circumstance no way pleasing, however a profitable one, as it is a Spur to Duty, a Guard and Restraint upon their whole Behaviour. Possibly, it may be so, when any eminent Dissenter, who makes a Profession *Strictness* in Religion, does things that are much amiss. And so, I can assure him, if any eminently *strict* and *zealous* Churchman does the same, the Church shall be loaded with his Crime, and it will be said, and often has been, on that Occasion, *These are the Friends, these are the Ornaments of the Church of England!* and may it not, then, be supposed, this will be a Spur to, a Guard, and Restraint upon *them*? But as to the common Herd, on one side or the other, I don't see but they may do as they please, without any mighty matter being made of it, or much said against their respective Churches. And, if it were otherwise, it is not likely, that Consideration would have any weight with *them*, or be any Check to *their* Appetites. It will be a Check to none, besides eminent Professors; and it will be an *equal* Check to those, of both sides. And, indeed, I am somewhat of opinion, our unhappy Dissensions have made both *them* and *us* a little more circumspect in our Conduct than we might otherwise have been. This Advantage, I am ready to think, we *do* reap from our religious Dissensions. An Advantage, however dearly bought, at the Expence of Truth, and Peace, and Charity, the Welfare of our Country, and the Honour of our common Christianity.

And

And now, Sir, I take my leave of your Author's Reasonings about the *special Obligations* you are supposed to lie under, and the *superior Advantages* you are pretended to enjoy above *us* of the established Church, towards your Increase in Piety, and speeding your Way to Heaven. — If it be thought, as very probably it may, (and, truly, I begin to flatter myself, it appears, by this time, Sir, to *you*) that this Author is a little too *visionary*, in reckoning such things for *mighty Advantages*, which no Mortal besides can see to be *any at all*, and that he has not argued upon these Heads, as one would have expected a Writer who so well understands, as he certainly does, the *right Use of Reason*, should do; it ought to be remembered, this is no more than what happened to the famous *Grotius*, to Sir *Thomas More*, and happens every day to the greatest Men, when they take upon them to defend any favourite Notion, or inveterate Prejudice they have been bred up in, or have, afterwards, unwarily entertained. On such Occasions, they often fall infinitely beneath themselves, and write in a manner that discredits the great Abilities God has given them. Many excellent Talents this Writer is certainly possessed of; and it is much to be wished, he had wholly employed them on other Subjects, on which he could not have failed both to *please* and *profit* us.

Having now given you my Thoughts concerning those *special Advantages* which you suppose yourselves to enjoy above *us*, in order to a good and holy Life, and shewn, that you really have no Advantage in any of those Particulars, and that, in some of them, the Advantage is evidently and greatly on our side; let me entreat you, Sir, in my turn, to consider some things I shall take
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the liberty to suggest to you, which I humbly apprehend to be great Advantages peculiar to us, and almost, if not entirely, wanting in your Churches.

You need not be told, Sir, (I dare say) that Christian Faith is the only true Foundation of Christian Holiness. Now, in our Church, we have some Provision, and that one of the most effectual, both for the *teaching* and *preserving* the Christian Faith entire and uncorrupt, which is not in yours; I mean the Use of the three Creeds in the public Worship. By this means the great and capital Points of Belief are rendered familiar to our People, and they come to have in their Minds a regular Scheme of it. And if *you* are taught, now and then, some of these Articles, from the Pulpit, I fear there are others, which you hear little or nothing of. Nor is it only a proper means to make them readily remember, and easily understand their Faith, but also a powerful means to keep them in it, in opposition to Heresies and false Doctrines that corrupt it. For, surely, they will be the more confirmed in it by seeing the whole Church, many of them better instructed, and more knowing than themselves, concurring in the open Profession of it. And if any have unhappily swerved from it, they are hereby distinguished, and made manifest, especially if they be Ministers, who cannot rehearse the Creeds, if they do not believe *every* Article thereof. So that if one of these happens to be heretical, or is fallen into any Error contrary to the Faith, he must quit his Station in the Church to one who is sounder in it, or else expose himself, by an open and odious Prevarication, to such Abhorrence in the Hearts of all Men, as will keep him from being able to spread much Infection among others. I own,
your

your Ministers do subscribe to all the Creeds, in subscribing to the Articles, and (what I would more particularly point out to *your* Observation) the *Athanasian* Creed, as well as the other; which let them reconcile, as they can, with those *free Censures* some of them pass upon it. However, we find, in fact, by some few Instances in our own Church, that *subscribing in private* is one thing, and *rehearsing them publickly*, before the Church, is another; those who can do, without any difficulty, the former, strangely boggling at the latter. And, I am ready to think, that, if the open Confession of your Faith, in the Words of these Creeds, had been as much a necessary Part of your Worship as it is of ours, the Doctrine of *Arius* would not have been so rife among your *London* Ministers, and many too in the Country, as it appeared, some Years ago, to be. And, therefore, I hope, these Formularies of our Faith will never be detached from our Liturgy, how long and loud soever Heretics or Latitudinarians call for it.

I desire, Sir, to be excused while I relate to you, out of my Lord *Clarendon*, a pleasant Accident relating to this Subject, which fell out at the Treaty of *Uxbridge*. The Commissioners being all together at the Fire-side, entertaining themselves with general and casual Discourse, one of the King's Commissioners asked one of the other side, with whom he had Familiarity, in a low Voice, *Why there was not, in their whole Directory, any mention at all of the Creed, or the Ten Commandments, and so little of the Lord's Prayer.* Which my good Lord of *Pembroke* over-hearing, he answered aloud, that *he and many others were very sorry they had been left out, that the putting them in had taken up many Hours Debate in the House of Commons, and that at last the*
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leaving them out had been carried by eight or nine Voices; and so, they did not think fit to insist upon the Addition of them in the House of Peers; but many were afterwards troubled at it; and he verily believed, if it were to do again, they should carry it for inserting them all. Which made many smile, (as well it might) to hear that the Creed and Ten Commandments had been put to the Question, and rejected. And there is little doubt, but the throwing out the Creeds from the publick Worship was one Inlet to those monstrous and execrable Heresies, which, at that time, grew up among us, as the removal of the Episcopal Government was certainly another. And it is not unlikely that *Cromwell* himself had something of this in his Thoughts, when he would often say, *That there was much of Good in the Order of Bishops, if the Dross were but scowered off.*

From these means for preserving *the Purity of the Faith* pass we on to others for promoting *Holiness of Life*. I scorn, Sir, to name the Cross at Baptism, or any human Ceremony in our Church; though I think too, I have as much Reason to make that a *Promoter*, as your Author has to make it a *Hinderer* of Holiness. And yet, I must say, when it is used at the Baptism of an adult Person, I cannot see why it may not be supposed to make some Impression upon his Mind, to stir it up to certain holy Purposes and Resolutions; as, particularly, a Resolution not to be *ashamed to profess the Faith of Christ crucified*.—In the primitive Church, Sir, it was a common Case, that newly baptized Persons were hurried immediately to their Martyrdoms. Now, is it not reasonable to think, that the *Lord's Signet* (as it was then called) which they had just before demanded, and devoutly received upon their Foreheads, might have some Influence upon them, to

make them *ashamed* of falling away from the Faith of *Christ*, to *strengthen* them (I mean, Sir, in a natural Way) against their approaching Sufferings, to make them *valiant for the Truth*, and *faithful unto Death*? As our Minds and Affections, in this present State, are apt to be strongly impressed and influenced by the Power of Sense and Imagination, such an affecting Ceremony, at such a time, might have, perhaps, a greater Effect than a serious Exhortation.—But of these Matters you may think as you please; for I lay no mighty stress upon them.

I lay a much greater stress upon another Appointment of the Church, relating to Baptism; and that is, the Use of Godfathers and Godmothers. I had before occasion to vindicate this Institution from the Charge, or rather the *Suspicion* or *Imagination*, of an evil Tendency and Effect: And now I shall shew it to be a *wise*, an *useful*, and *necessary* Institution. And though your Author has been pleased not only to slight it, *as not needful*, but to condemn it, *as not proper*; some of the hottest Advocates for the Dissenting Cause, and most given to libel, overlash, and run riot in opposition to the Church, have owned it to be not only *useful*, but, in many Cases, *necessary*.^a Mr. Peirce himself, amidst all his Misrepresentations of our Sense and Practice in this Particular, confesses it to be so. *It is not*, (says he) *any matter of Controversy between us, Whether it be lawful and useful, that, when Infants are baptized, some honest pious Persons should make a publick Profession of the Christian Faith in the Assembly, and promise to take care (if God spares them) that the Child, as soon as he becomes capable, should be trained up in the Christian Faith and Practice. Nor do we dispute whether any, besides the Parents, may be allowed to perform this Office. We acknowledge there is a Ne-*

^a *Vindic. of Dissenters*, Part III. Ch. 6.

cessity they should, in some Cases; as, if the Parents are dead; or, by reason of their great distance, cannot be present at the baptizing their Children; or, if they are so ignorant in the Christian Religion, or so heretical in their Opinions, and vicious in their Lives, that their Promise cannot be looked upon as fit to be taken by the Church.——Now, Sir, if it be necessary in so many Cases, I would beg leave to observe three things; *the first*, that our Church has done wisely in requiring it in *all* Cases, that the Clergy may not be obliged to be always making odious Distinctions (which sometimes, perhaps, would be groundless and arbitrary too) among their Parishioners, by requiring Sponsors for the Children of *some*, and not of *others*, which would have been a Source of endless Heats and Animosities between them. *The second* is, that Mr. *Peirce*, and such of his Brethren as are of his Mind, are much to blame for not introducing into their Churches the Use of Sponsors, at least in those Cases wherein they allow it to be necessary. And the other thing I would observe, most to my present Purpose, is, that, since they have not done it, we have, in *our* Church, this Advantage towards the bringing up of Children in the Fear of God, and the Faith of the Gospel, which is not in *yours*.

I hope, Sir, you will not offer to argue with me (as Gentlemen of your Persuasion commonly do) against the Institution of Godfathers and Godmothers, from the little Thought and Care they are often seen to take in discharging the Obligations they are under. For, if you do, I shall be obliged to reply, it is nothing to the purpose; because our present Enquiry is, Whether the Church does not afford its Members some great and special Advantages towards growing in Grace and Goodness, above what are to be found among you; not, whether all its Members

do their Duties, and make a right Use of those Advantages it affords them. And yet, if you insist upon it, we are ready to join Issue with you, even upon that footing. We will not deny, but the greatest part of those who undertake this Office do not discharge it so conscientiously as they ought, (as Parents themselves often do not) and heartily wish ^a some things were either removed or regulated, whereby that, in part, is occasioned. But then, Sir, there are some, who *do* make a Conscience of doing their Duties in it: And it is worth while to keep up the Institution for *their* Sakes. And, as far as *their* honest and faithful Discharge of *their* Duty goes, so far the Church actually receives Benefit, of which, you know, there is nothing in *your* Churches. The late Dr. *Bray* was a very observing Man, and watchful Pastor; and he assures us, *He has known, himself, many Instances of Persons, who owe that Understanding they have of Religion, and the Fear of God, purely, next under God, to the Care of their Godfathers and Godmothers.* I believe him: For I can myself name others, who have been more mindful of the pious Education of the Children they were Sureties for, than their Parents were, and, particularly, have procured for them the religious Education of our Charity Schools, which

^a Such, for example, as the high Fees given to Nurses, Midwives, and Servants. These have been the Occasion of much Perplexity and Trouble to many Parents, who have not known how to ask their Friends to do an Office so expensive to them. And this Perplexity of the Parents has not only grown into a sort of Disaffection to the very Institution, but has often obliged them to pass over their more serious Friends and Relations, who could not conveniently, (they thought) or would not care to part with the Sums expected, and to take up with others, loose and disorderly Persons, who would more readily, or could better do it; whereby the Office has been exposed to Contempt and Ridicule, and the End of it, in those Instances, quite defeated.

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their Parents took no Care to do. And, I suppose, there are few who make any Observations of this nature, but can point out to you other Instances of the like kind.

The next Administration in our Church is Confirmation. This, you know, you have wholly discarded. And, surely, you will be obliged to acknowledge, you have lost thereby a very great Advantage : For, when it is received after due Preparation, and with the requisite Qualifications and Dispositions, it cannot but greatly conduce to future Holiness of Life. Many Protestant Churches, besides our own, have this Opinion of it, and do, accordingly retain it. The Judgment of *Calvin*, that it is an *Apostolical Institution*, is well known ; as is also his Wish, that it were every where restored. And I can tell you of one (in his day one of the greatest Oracles of your Party^a) who declared his thorough Approbation of it, and, in the late times, called loudly for its Restoration, and said, *The Directory, without it, was more imperfect than the Common-Prayer.* The late Dr. *Calamy* too was in the same Sentiments touching this Matter. ^b *It would be (says he) very becoming and advantageous, did Persons every where, before they first communicated, freely profess their Sincerity, and Constancy in their Baptismal Covenant or Vow, and openly declare themselves, in the Face of a Christian Congregation, Enemies to the Devil, the World, and the Flesh. And this is the most considerable Part of that which has been wont to be called Confirmation ; a thing much practised and insisted upon in the Primitive Church, though of later Times much neglected, and by some laid aside, as useless ; the more's the Pity.*

^a Mr. Baxter.

^b *Practical Discourse concerning Vows*, p. 87.

And,

And, surely, Confirmation, if not absolutely necessary, is yet very requisite in any Church which practises Infant Baptism. We are used to be pressed, by the Antipædobaptists, with the Conveniency and Usefulness of deferring Baptism, till People arrive at Years of Discretion, when they may, upon mature Judgment and deliberate Choice, consent to, and take upon themselves the Covenant of God in it. And how do we answer them? Not by saying, there is no need, no use and benefit of so doing; but by telling them, we do it in Confirmation. How you answer them I know not. Indeed, Dr. Calamy does inform us, that ^a *Conversation with the Pastor of each Christian Society, is expected before any one's first communicating, that Satisfaction may be given, that such as come to partake of the holy Eucharist, do understand the Nature of their Baptismal Obligation, and are willing to stand to it.* But what is this to those who dare not offer themselves to the Sacrament, or are not admitted to it? And as to those who are, is such a private Transaction, between them, and their Minister, to be held enough? No, by no means; and Dr. Calamy himself not only confesses, but contends, it is not enough. ^b *The publick Transaction of this Matter he thinks much more eligible; and observes to that Purpose, that many Instances may be produced, where very near as much depends upon the Manner of doing a Thing, as on the Thing itself, and this he takes to be one.* And if it would not be (he says) too great a Digression, he could make it appear, that the Scripture favours such a public Recognition of the Baptismal Vow, and that 'tis agreeable to the Practice of the Church in several successive Ages. And I can't help further

^a *Account of Protestant Dissenters*, p. 47.

^b *Practical Discourse concerning Vows*, p. 89.

observing,

observing, by the bye, that he plainly approves *Imposition of Hands, joined with serious Prayers to God for the strengthening and confirming Grace of his Spirit; for those who come to own their Baptismal Vow, openly, in the Face of a Christian Congregation, and an authoritative Benediction on the Part of the Minister, as God's Officer.* I will own to you, we are bound to perform the Baptismal Covenant, whether we renew and take it solemnly upon ourselves, or not. But, surely, you cannot think, that the open and solemn Renewal of it, before God and many Witnesses, according to the manner of our Church, is a needless, or useless thing, and has no Fitness to awaken and engage Men to the better Performance of it. Let it be supposed, there are *some* who come to Confirmation more for *Form and Custom*, than any thing else, and are neither better nor worse for it. That is their own Fault; and they may come, upon no higher Principles and Motives, to Baptism, or the Lord's Supper, and be just as much benefited by those Ordinances. But, then, there are many others, who come to it prepared and qualified as the Church would have them, and as they ought to be. And are not these like to be better for it? Does not God give his holy Spirit to them that ask it? And if ever the Unction of the Holy Spirit can be expected, as the Return of Prayer, surely it must be, when the chief Pastor and his Flock assemble together on purpose to implore it, and when those on whose behalf they implore it are qualified to receive it, when, after a thorough Instruction in the Nature of their Baptismal Covenant, and their Obligations to perform their Part of it, they appear, upon mature Deliberation, and free Choice, in the Presence of God, and the Face of his Church, to own and renew, and are sincerely resolved, with the Help of God's Grace, to perform it.

it. And if you can shew, there is nothing in all this that is *engaging*, nothing that is like to *bind* and *awe* the Conscience, nothing fit to make them more virtuous and religious, and to help them forward in the right Way that leads to everlasting Life, I will never talk more of the Fitness of any thing for any thing, as long as I live.

We have, Sir, another powerful Means for the promoting of Virtue, and furtherance of Holiness, which seems little minded in your Churches; and that is *Fasting*. I don't mean fasting on rare and special Occasions, on account of national Calamity, or Guilt; but fasting frequently, and in a regular Course, for mortifying the Body, and subduing or weakening the Principles of Sin, the *Lusts that war in our Members*. No body can doubt of this being a Duty. Perhaps, Nature itself teaches it; for we see it practised by some Heathens, as well as Jews and Christians. On which account, we may the less wonder, if it be true, that there is not to be found, in the New Testament, any positive Injunction of it. I say, if it be true; because the Words of our Lord concerning his Followers and Disciples, when he should be taken from them, *and then shall they fast*, are understood by some in a *preceptive* Sense. Let that be as it will; the Duty is sufficiently established by his prescribing *Rules*, and giving *Cautions* about it, and proposing everlasting Rewards to the right Performance of it, as you will find he does, *Mat. ix. 16, 17, 18*; and by the Practice of his immediate Disciples, and particularly *St. Paul*, who speaks of his *Fastings often*, and *keeping under his Body, lest, when he had preached to others, he himself should be a Cast-away*. By this Instance we may see, that the Discipline of Fasting is requisite even for those, for many of those, to be sure it is, who are yet temperate in their whole

whole Course of Life. How much more, then, for others, who live in Pleasure and Indulgence, in order to correct the Rankness, and reduce the Redundancy of their Spirits, whereby they are filled with worldly and carnal Affections, and pushed violently on to many things which *drown them in Destruction and Perdition*. Therefore the Church rightly prays, *We may have Grace to use such Abstinence, that the Flesh may be subdued to the Spirit*. Nor does she only pray for the *Grace*, but teaches the *Duty* in her Homilies, and in the Sermons and Exhortations of her Clergy; and has appointed proper Seasons for the Exercise thereof, one solemn annual Fast, others at proper distances, and one day in most Weeks of the Year as you may see in the Rules and Tables prefixed to the Book of Common-Prayer.

As to our *Practice* in the Matter of Fasting, be pleased to take notice, *that* is not the Subject of our present Enquiry or Debate. *That*, I will own to you, is not, generally, what it ought to be. I say generally, because the devoutest Members of our Church do yet make a Conscience of this Duty and exercise themselves continually in the Practice of it. However, you see, Sir, here, the watchful Care of our Church, that this important Duty be not overlooked or neglected. And, unless you can shew the like Care is taken of it among *you*, confess the Advantages you lose by being divided from it. If I am not mightily deceived, you will be found to have reformed in this, just as you have done in many other Instances; that is, thrown away the thing, out of dislike to the *false* or *nugatory* manner in which it was observed in the Papacy. I don't remember that any notice is taken of it in those Formularies which are regarded among you, as containing your Faith and Practice; nor have I yet

met with any Sermons, or other Treatises of your Ministers, shewing the Obligation, and pressing the Practice of it upon their People; nor have I heard of its being practised even by the strictest and devoutest among you. If these things be otherwise than they appear to *me*, and I am really mistaken, *here, Sir, I am*, ready to retract my Mistake, being desirous in *this*, as in *all* other things, to be set right.

I also humbly apprehend, that as these are proper means to *promote* Virtue and Holiness, so Virtue and Holiness are *taught* in a better manner in our Church. As your Author observes, that *different Parties of Christians have their peculiar Ways in Preaching, and the present Conformists and Non-conformists have their different Manners, as well in composing, as delivering their Sermons*, so their different Manners are to be plainly seen in this, that the former preach up more the *Duties*, the latter more the *Privileges* of the Saints, holding in contempt the preaching of Duties, under the low and degrading Character (as they, at least, mean it) of preaching up Morality, or good Works. No body doubts, but preaching the Privileges of Believers is, or may be, being properly managed, very useful. Our very Catechism begins with teaching our Children their Privileges, as visible baptised Christians; and we may properly say of these two what our Lord said concerning the Tythe of *Mint, and Anise, and Cummin*, on the one hand, and *Judgment, Mercy, and Faith*, on the other, *These ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone*. However, of the two, your neglect of preaching the *Duties* is more *evident*, as it is, in itself, more *inexcusable*, and of *worse Consequence*, than ours of preaching the *Privileges* of the Faithful. And what but a consciousness of his

his Brethren's neglect of, and of their, or, at least, their People's averfeness to this sort of preaching, led Dr. *Watts* to attempt to explain, in two Volumes of Sermons, *many of the Duties of the Christian Life, that refer to our fellow Creatures*, and to bespeak a favourable Reception to them in such Words as these? ^a *I hope no man who loves the Gospel of Christ will knit his Brows at the Title Page, or throw Disgrace upon the Book with a contempt of dull Morality. If such a Person would give himself leave to peruse these Sermons, perhaps he would meet with so much of Christ and the Gospel in them, that he might learn to love his Saviour better than ever he did, and find how necessary moral Duties are to make his own Religion either Safe or Honourable. While we are saved* (continues he) *by Faith of the Blood and Righteousness of the Son of God, we must remember also that 'tis such a Faith as works by Love; for Faith without Works is dead and useless to all Purposes of Hope and Salvation.* The Works which the Doctor recommends, and we desire to be preached and inculcated, are not those they make such a stir within the Church of *Rome*; not Penances, Pilgrimages, endowing of Monasteries, and enriching the Shrines of Saints; but the substantial good Works of Faith and Piety, Justice and Charity, of Temperance, Meekness, and Humility, and such other as God has commanded us to walk in. And I am free to leave it to any unprejudiced Man to judge, whether *despising and neglecting*, or *being instant* in the preaching of these truly good and essential Works of Religion, be the more likely way to advance Virtue and holy living.

^a Preface to Vol. II.

I would also further observe, that the Church has no Doctrines whereby she *destroys* what she has *built*, none whereby a holy Life is either made *unnecessary*, or *discouraged*. She does not teach the absurd and dangerous Doctrines (give me leave to call them) of absolute Election and Reprobation, with the Points hanging thereupon, which were once the *Skibboleth* of your Party, and *even now* are taught, it is supposed, by the greatest Part of your Ministers. I say nothing of the Antinomian Doctrines. The rank Antinomianism of Dr. *Chrisp*, which once greatly prevailed in the Churches, is now, I will suppose, generally decried. And yet, let me tell you, there is reason to fear, there are those among you who have no Dislike to his Positions. And this, I cannot but suspect, is one Reason that such mighty Civilities are shewn, such Countenance and Encouragement given, by divers of your Ministers, to a *young, conceited, solifidian Enthusiast*, who has lately started up among us. It is well, Men do not *always* act according to their *Principles*, nor set their *Practices* by their *Opinions*. If they did, and the forementioned Doctrines were to spread, and generally prevail, there would be *little Virtue*, and *few good Works* in the World.

As it is not my Intention to exhaust the Subject, and to count up *all* the Advantages *we* enjoy, and *you* lose, by living out of Communion with the Church; so, I will put you in mind of only *one* more, and that is in regard to *Devotion*, in the limited Sense of the Word, as it signifies Prayer, particularly that which is public. In *our* Church, we have *better Provision*, and *more frequent Opportunities* afforded for it, than are to be had among *you*. Is it not true, Sir, that your Meeting-houses are shut up from one Lord's Day to another, unless

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it be here and there one, where there happens to be a Lecture on the Week-Days? Whereas, in our Church, public Prayers are ordered to be read every day; and if, in small Villages, where Families live dispersed, and there are few can afford time, or have inclination to attend them, the thing is generally impracticable, it is well known to be practised in all Cities, and most great Towns in the Kingdom; and, in *London*, you cannot but have heard, there are Opportunities for public Prayer, not only every day, but every hour of it. So that a Man, in the hurry of great Business, if he can find half an Hour of leisure time, (as he easily may, one Part of the Day or other, if he be so minded, and his Thoughts turn that way) may go into a Church, and say his Prayers, whereby his Business may be sanctified, and rendered more acceptable to God; and they who have more leisure may do it oftener.

— It has been the Wish of some pious Men, that there were Protestant Foundations, where Men or Women devoutly disposed, and disengaged from the World, (without entangling themselves with any Vows) might live together in Society, and give themselves up to the Service of God. I shall not trouble you with *my* Thoughts, whether such Societies be desirable; but, really, I think they are not *much* wanted: For such Persons as have no attachment to the World, and are of devout Tempers, and would probably, embrace that sort of Life, have it now in their Power to live in a way that will fully answer all the religious Ends and Purposes thereof. In most Cities and great Towns, and especially in *London* (as I said before) they may live as retired, and say their Prayers as often as they please. In the midst of the Crowd, they may be, as if they were in the Desert, overlooking the World, and overlooked by it. They will not be confined
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there, as in such Societies, to one Set of Company, agreeable, or otherwise, just as it shall happen; but, if they chuse any, may have only those for their Companions and Familiars, who have the same spiritual Gust and Relish with themselves. And they may, now and then, launch out into, and mix with the World, whenever a Prospect opens, and Opportunity offers, of doing Good in it. Here they may dedicate any Portion of their Time to holy Meditation, and private Prayer, and as much of it as they please to public. And there is scarce a Day in the Week but they may hear the Word of God preached in one or other of our Churches, nor (in some Parishes, if I mistake not) any Lord's Day, or Holyday, but they may receive the Holy Sacrament upon it. *Here*, they may say their Prayers without Formality, and say them often, (because without Force and Compulsion) without Weariness, and may be Recluses without that Spleen, Melancholy, Envy, Pride, and those Bickerings, Factions, and Contentions, which are well known to prevail in the Cloysters, among the People who (in their way) have given themselves to God. Are not these, Sir, very powerful Means towards the Advancement of Devotion? And, if you cannot say you have any such, which way can you avoid owning, they are great Advantages on our Side, unless it should be by undervaluing and making Devotion a thing of no account.

After the Church has taken such good Care for the *Faith*, the *Practice*, and *Devotion* of its Members, it cannot but be a mighty Satisfaction to them, to see themselves, too, *on the safe Side*, in regard to two things, the Charge of Schism, and the Want of valid regular Administrations. There is a stale Jest that goes about, and some People have taken mightily to it, That Schism is only a *theological*
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Scarecrow. A Jest——which has rendered their Minds perfectly impenetrable by all the Reasonings that can be offered, to shew them the Danger of it. I hope your Ministers never speak of it so slightly; if they do, I must take the Liberty to say, they cannot be sincere: For I have always observed, that when any Part of their Congregations is growing mutinous, and seems in a Disposition to divide itself from the rest, they never fail to ring in their Ears the Sinfulness of making a Schism in the Church, in order to deter them from their Purposes. Though, by the way, I think they are a little too rash in venturing the mention of Schism to them; for that may put them in mind of the Schism of the whole Congregation from the Church of *England*, and of their Duty to return to it. Believe me, Sir, at least believe the Scriptures, and the Voice of Catholic Antiquity, that the Charge of Schism, where it can fairly be fixed, is not to be slighted. The least Suspicion of it, a Man would think, should not a little discompose a *scrupulous*, or a *tender* Conscience. But how a Conscience in either of those States can digest a Schism which is so *manifest* and *causeless*, and, by consequence, so *unwarrantable* as the present, is past my Skill to find out.

I am aware, Sir, you are accustomed to call your Schism a *peaceable Separation*; and as the clapping a plausible Name upon an ill thing has, in all Cases, a strange Power to *change*, *correct*, and *meliorate* the Idea of it, of which I could soon give you twenty Instances; so, in the present Case, you can hardly conceive how a thing which you are used to call by so *good*, and so *soft* a Name, can be so very criminal. But I must own, Sir, my Inability to apprehend, with what Sense or Consistency those two Words can be put together. The very *Nature* and *Essence* of the *Substantive* excludes the *Epithet*
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you join to it. And if I was writing to a perverse Adversary, as I am to a Friend, I should be ready to call this lame *peaceable Separation* of yours, a Piece of arrant Nonsense and Contradiction. Every causeless Separation, Sir, from the Church, is a Breach of that Peace and Unity that *ought* to be in it; and therefore, no such Separation *can* be peaceable.—Put the Case, that a Wife should take a fancy to live by herself, in some private Part of the House, forsaking as well the Bed as the Board of her Husband; and, by little Artifices and crafty Suggestions, endeavour to engage the Children and Servants of the Family in sidings against him. Would you call this a *peaceable Separation*? I am very certain you would *not*. No, Sir; the Peace of that Family is broken, though there should be neither fighting nor scolding; but all the Decencies of well-bred Hatred or Indifferency should be kept up. Or, if you think the Case of a Wife, separating herself from her Husband, after this manner, is not so like, I will put another. Suppose two or three of the Counties in *Great-Britain or Ireland*, should take a Disgust at *Monarchical* Government, and, throwing off their Alligance to his Majesty, go about to form themselves into a Commonwealth: Would you allow *this* to be called a peaceable Separation? No more, I dare say, than the former. You are too good a Subject of the King to speak or to hear any Body else, with Patience, speak of it in that *soft* and *tender* manner; and would certainly pronounce it a *disloyal* and *rebellious* Proceeding, though it were ever so much their desire to do all *without Tumult*, with great Professions of Honour for the Person of his Majesty, and of mighty Good-will to the rest of their Fellow-subjects, who thought fit to continue firm in their Allegiance to him. And if *this* Separation would not be *peaceable* and innocent, how Sir,
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can *yours* be? The Catholic Church is *one outward and visible Society*, divinely instituted, and indeed the most admirable and glorious Society, that ever has been, or will be seen under Heaven; and (consequently) whenever a Breach is made in the Unity thereof, when Diffensions arise in it, especially, when they come to be consummated in opposite Communions, the Peace of the Church is evidently lost, though that of the State, possibly, may be preserved, and People may be kept from coming to Blows about it: Yet even that, you are not to be told, has sometimes happened.

The Case is yet worse, when you leave the Communion (as I think you do) of your lawful Bishops and Priests, duly ordained to their Office, to put yourselves under the Guidance and Administrations of others, not duly ordained to it. I pretend not to assert, that the Administrations of such, where no other can be had, are of no effect; but am firmly persuaded that, in such Cases, Cases of real and unavoidable Necessity, God will confer upon Believers in a more compendious Way, all the Benefits of his saving Sacraments. And the same I am willing to believe, in regard to those who attend such Administrations through invincible Ignorance, and a natural Incapacity to judge of these Matters. But as I am sure, the latter is far from being your Case, so you will not say, I presume, the former is. And therefore you cannot depend, at least, with so much Assurance as is requisite for the Peace and Acquiescence of your Mind, that such Ordinances will be blessed to you. But, to set things at the lowest, the Callings and Ordinations of your Ministers, and, by consequence, their Administrations, are, most certainly, irregular. And an unnecessary, whether it be a factious, or only a wanton Departure from Regularity, from the primitive

mitive Rule and Order established in the Church, cannot, surely, be pleasing to God. How it is, Sir, with you I know not; but sure I am, were I of a Church which I beheld thus lying, and choosing to lie in these Irregularities and Defects, I should have no Peace till I was out of it, though the godliest People in the Nation, or those who are reputed such, were universally crowding into it.

And now, Sir, I have gone through the *special Obligations*, which your Author supposes you are under, to a more eminent Holiness of Life, with the *peculiar Advantages* you are *pretended* also to enjoy, and some of those many, which, I humbly apprehend, *we* in the Communion of the Church *do* enjoy above *you*, in order to it. Which of these, upon the Comparison, are the most solid Advantages, and of the most real Efficacy towards rendring Men holy, must be left to your serious Consideration.

But I shall hardly be thought to have finished the Task I undertook, without going a Step or two farther, without considering together the Lives of Conformists and Nonconformists, or, at least, seeing what may be reasonably said in abatement of *the Fact*, which you seem so firmly to believe, and so much to rejoice in, that the Members of Dissenting Churches do greatly excel the rest of the Nation in Purity and Sanctity of Life; and then, in disproof of the Conclusion you would draw from it, that your Way of Religion is, *therefore*, better, or that this Consideration may justly prejudice, if not determine the Choice of any Person in its Favour, or make him, if he was bred up in it, quite easy in the Profession of it. If there really be such a remarkable Superiority on your Side, I doubt, you will be still ready to suspect, there must be, somewhere or other, in your Churches, great Advan-
tages

tages concerning the Things of Religion and Godliness, though you should find yourself obliged to give up those on which your Author has insisted, or to own those in our Church which I have insisted on. If there be no Superiority at all, or but little, or not greater than may be accounted for, by considering the particular Situation, and other Circumstances of Dissenters, there will be a Presumption, that you have no Advantages above *us*. Let us then see how the *Fact* stands.

When we were discoursing upon this Subject, you gave me, I think, a Hint; but, indeed, so distant a one, that I did not then think myself obliged to take any notice of it, concerning the Lives of Ministers, as well as the People, on both Sides: And it may not, perhaps, be amiss to enter, *now*, a little, into some Considerations of that sort. A strict Comparison between them is not the thing I intend. Any such Comparison would not only be odious, but of dangerous Consequence, as it might lessen the Credit of them both, and, by natural Consequence, the Credit of Religion itself. It would be something like comparing *moral* with *positive* Duties, the *internal* with the *external* Evidences of Revealed Religion; the Advocates for one Side saying, inconsiderately, all they can to disparage the other, whilst the Infidel, laughing in his Sleeve, greedily picks up all that is said against *both*, to set them *both* at naught. You shall then see, I will not go about to raise the Characters of *ours*, by dishonouring and vilifying *your* Ministers, nor follow the Example which some of them have set me, who have published to the World, that ^a *a very great many Clergymen* (*some*, it seems, would not do, nor *many*, nor *a great many*, but it must be *a very great*

^a Peirce's *Vindic. of Dissenters*, Part I. p. 279.

many: which, one would think, can be meant for no fewer than a third or fourth Part of the Whole, so many, he says) *have little to distinguish them from Heathens, or to persuade a Belief of their Christianity; nay, that their Lives are worse than those of Pagans.* Notwithstanding the Character which this Gentleman is pleased to give of them, which very probably, one time or other, will have the Honour to be found among the Gleanings of some Infidel Writer; I will venture to say, they deserve a very different one, (nor do I mean or desire the Dissenting Ministers should be excluded from the Benefit of it) that they are, in general, the most *irreproachable, uncorrupt, and virtuous* Part of the Nation. I suppose, you will say, *So they ought to be*; and you will say true. Nor shall I say false, when I say, *So they are.* They are still, Sir, let their Envious and Maligners say what they will, *the Salt of the Earth*; and though they have lost something of their primitive Savour (as, in length of time, all things do) the World, if it were not for them, would quickly grow so corrupt, there would be no enduring, or living in it. Take, Sir, if you please, any corporate Body, Trade, Profession, or Order of Men, of any Credit among us, and compare them with the Clergy, as to the general Course and Tenour of their Lives, and you will soon find, (though, I thank God, too, there are some of exemplary Sanctity of Life, in every Order and Profession) yet, I say, you will soon find, upon such a Comparison, what I now say to be true. Or only dress up in your Imagination (which is a very good one) any one of those Orders and Professions, in the *Clerical Habit*, put them on the *Gown*, and clap upon their Heads the *broad-brim'd Beaver Hat*, with the *Rose* on it; then place them, some in Town, and some in the Country, so that they shall not be suspected

suspected to be other than real Clergymen, and let them pursue the same Course of Life they did before ; and, in a few Months, you will imagine you see every Mouth open against them, and hear every Place ring, and that in another manner than the most infamous Places do now, with the Corruption and Degeneracy, the intolerable Indiscretions and Vices of the Clergy. Those that *before* lived in some Credit, as Laymen, will be *now* little esteemed, and pass for *worthless*, if not *scandalous Ministers*. And those who enjoyed, *before their Clerical Appearance*, great Wealth, or high Dignities, unenvied, will *now* hardly be thought deserving a Country School, or Curacy. It is not pretended to be denied, but there are some, who really are of the Cloth, that are a Disgrace to it. The Clergy are but Men, and, to be sure, come into the World with the same original Corruption and Vitiosity that other Men do ; and therefore it is no wonder, if they have, *all*, their *Faults* and *Blemishes*, their Frailties and Imperfections, and some are not free from greater *Crimes* and *Scandals*. It may be, you will say, we hear not so often of Scandals arising among the Dissenting Ministers, as among the Clergy. Would it be reasonable to expect you should ? Is it likely, there should be found as many among *ten*, as an *hundred* ; among a *hundred*, as a *thousand* ; or among a *thousand*, as *ten thousand* Persons ? In most Neighbourhoods, perhaps, there are *ten*, and in some, *twice that Number* of regular Clergymen, to *one* Dissenting Minister. And if but *one* of that Number be found, not so blameless and irreproachable in his Life, as that single Gentleman happens to be, we are presently bid to take notice, how much better *your* Ministers live, than *ours*. But it does not follow. If you would judge rightly in this Case, you must produce an equal

Number

Number of each Sort ; and for *twenty* regular Clergymen (suppose) all living together in the same Neighbourhood, all perfectly known to you, you must bring us *twenty* Dissenting Ministers, though you should fetch a Compass of forty Miles for them, to whom, excepting, perhaps, two or three, we are absolute Strangers, and of whose Lives we have never heard any Character, good or bad. Or if it happens that we have heard of *some* of them any ill thing, we have not, perhaps, the means to satisfy ourselves whether the thing be true or false ; and so, it will, probably, pass for an idle and uncertain Report. And if we *suppose*, or though we *know* it to be true, yet as we know not their Persons, and hardly, perhaps, their Names, it will make little Impression on our Minds, and the Scandal of it will soon be forgotten.

While we are considering the Lives of your Ministers, it will be proper, as it is obvious, to observe, that they are not so much exposed to *undeserved* Obloquy and Censure, as most of the Clergy of the Established Church unavoidably are. For having no farther Concern with the Pockets of the People than they themselves like, and are pleased to permit, they happily escape the morose or peevish Reflections of the covetous or knavish, which our Clergy, by the most reasonable and conscionable Demand of their legal Rights, often bring upon themselves. If a Clergyman ever demands *Small Dues*, *Avarice* is presently objected to him. It will be said, *It is beneath him to mind such Things* ; though, it may be, through the Sacrilege of former Times, he has scarcely any thing else left him. If he finds himself obliged, at any time, to take the *Remedy of Law*, though it were in the *easiest* and *cheapest* Method the Law prescribes, against such as withhold these Dues, or greater ones, the Charge
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of *Contentiousness* is sure to be added to the former. And if he is not content with those poor Pittances which the Consciences of *some* of his Parishioners would serve *them* to pay him, or which they fancy is all that is due to him, according to those crude Notions of Law and Right which they frame out of their own Heads, he shall hardly escape the Imputation of being injurious and oppressive. This is the hard Fate of most of *our* Clergy, especially the *Vicars* ; while *your* Ministers not only live at Ease, and free from Vexation, upon voluntary Contributions, but free also from those *unmerited* Reflections and Reproaches, which will often fall upon those of the Establishment. : And I have sometimes been ready to think, that, if the Wisdom of the Legislature could find out a Way to settle, *on a solid Foundation*, upon the *poor Vicar*, some equivalent and independent Revenue, in Lieu of these *small Matters*, it would not only secure his Peace, but help him to support and keep up his Credit and Esteem, better than now he *can* do, among his Neighbours, and be (consequently) a real Advancement to Religion.

Then again, the Tempers and Conducts of *your* People and *ours*, in regard to the *real* Faults of Ministers, are very different. *Our* People, knowing they do not depend altogether upon the Credit of their Guides, but have the Laws for the Support of the Church they are of, are apt to think there is no need of *close* and *subtle dealing* ; and therefore are observed to be undisguised in all their Conduct, free and open (probably too much so) in their Discourses and Censures of whatever they take to be amiss in the Lives of their Ministers. You shall hear them talk every day of the Faults and Misbehaviours of this and that Clergyman, *with as little Reserve*. as they would of their best Qualities and

greatest Virtues; while your People are observed to be *wonderfully secret in these*, as indeed, in *all* your Affairs. The arrantest Gossip and Tittle-tattle in the Congregation shall carry it with all the Closeness and Secrecy of a Confessor, in regard to the Failings of her Pastor; and they are seldom publickly known, unless an open Rupture with his People or his Entertaining Thoughts of Conformity brings them out. And then indeed, what was before *spoken only in the Ear in Closets, shall be proclaimed upon the House-tops.*

It should be considered too, that as their Faults and Failings are more carefully concealed, so their Virtues and good Qualities are more industriously published. Such as lie under the Imputation of Heresy, or have set themselves at the Head of a Party divided from the Church, will never want Virtues and Accomplishments, *Intellectual*, or *Moral*. 'Tis now, for that, just as it was in the Days of *Tertullian*, *Nusquam facilius proficitur quam in castris rebellium*. Men's Characters improve strangely, and take a wonderful Growth, in that Situation, and that, I doubt, is one Motive and Inducement to many to make choice of it. Those who bear Religion no good Will, will be sure to be the *Trumpeters* of *their* Praises, because they help to *confound* it. And those of their own Party are always found forwarder and louder in commending and extolling them above their Merits and Deservings, than such as adhere to their Orthodox and regular Ministers ever are to do *them* common Justice. You must have observed, this is the general Disposition of your Lay-People towards their Ministers. And your Ministers themselves seem agreed to take all Occasions to magnify one another; some Affectations of which sort I think I can plainly see, particularly in their Funeral Sermons, almost always in
regard

regard to the Dead, and sometimes the Living. By such Methods as these they may have, possibly, acquired a Reputation of Strickness of Life, above our Clergy, among the weak and prejudiced, while more competent and impartial Judges see little or nothing they have, in that respect, to boast of; hardly, indeed, so much, as, when their Circumstances, Situations, and Professions are considered, it may seem reasonable to expect.

For there are, Sir, some Considerations of that sort which make us naturally look for, and think we may justly expect to find, a greater Sanctity of Manners among *them*, than the Conforming Clergy. Their very Non-conformity is founded upon an open Profession of great *Tenderness of Conscience*, which cannot bear the least Instance of Sin, and starts at any Appearance of Evil. And if, *under such a Profession*, their Lives should be found, in any degree, disorderly, they cannot be ignorant they should be, deservedly, hissed at, and esteemed some of the vilest of Men. They must be also sensible, how much they depend, for their Maintenance, upon the good Thoughts their People have of them, and the favourable Opinion of those in Power for their Toleration. Thus, not only the Reputation, but the very Being and Subsistence of the Party they have set themselves at the Head of, depends upon the Goodness of their Characters, as Men of Piety and Virtue. And these are strong Obligations, if Reasons of Conveniency and present Interest may be called Obligations, to endeavour to *appear* such. I speak not thus to insinuate that they *only appear* such. Many, doubtless, and I hope most of them, *do* study to *be* what they are obliged to *appear* to be; tho' it is likely too, there may be *some* who only study *Appearances*. And, as they have *special Reasons* to approve themselves

good Men, so they have *fewer Temptations* to be otherwise, not being exposed to so many Influences prejudicial to the Virtue of Men, as the Clergy not only in ours, but in all national Churches whatever, unavoidably are. And if, notwithstanding all this, our Clergy are much upon a footing with *them* in all manner of virtuous and holy living, it is, in my Opinion, a just Matter of Commendation to them.

By this time, Sir, I should hope you might be pretty well satisfied, that the Lives of *your* Ministers do not excel, in point of Strictness and Regularity, those of *our* Clergy, so much as you seemed before to have thought: But if you are still of Opinion that they do, I must, I think, leave you to enjoy it, there being no Way to extort it from you, but by canvassing and comparing the Lives and Characters of Particulars, which (not to repeat the Reasons I before offered, why I declined such a Proceeding) would be as *foolish* to attempt, and as *impossible* to do, in any manner that shall be tolerably satisfactory, as it would be to determine who are the *fairest*, the *best shaped*, or *handsomest* Men. One thing, however, I have to offer you, in Balance; and that is, that the Lives of *our* Clergy are free from some Sorts of Guilt which, pardon me, Sir, lie heavy upon *your* Ministers; I mean, the Guilt of their *uncatholic* and *schismatical* Proceedings. Most People, when they hear of the good or the bad Lives of any, think of nothing else but their being *chaste* and *temperate*, *just* and *honest* in their Dealings, *charitable* to the Poor, or otherwise, and discharging *well* or *ill* the relative Duties of Life; whether they practise the Virtues, or are free from the Vices of the interior and spiritual kind, they are not apt to consider. But they never reflect how they
 behave

behave as Members of the Christian Society, the Church of God, and fulfil the Duties which they owe it. And yet this, surely, when we are speaking of Christians, should always enter into the Notion of good, or of bad living. In regard to these Matters, I mean those of the last sort, your Ministers, Sir, are notoriously peccant, throwing off the Authority of those whom they ought to obey and submit themselves to, and acting in open contempt of them, dividing themselves causelessly from a sound Part of the Catholic Church which they belong to, and gathering to themselves Churches out of it; by which means the Household of God is divided into innumerable Sects and Parties, to the great Dishonour of Religion, the Scandal of Jews, Turks, and Heathens, the Sport of Infidels, unsettling the Weak, grieving the Minds of good Men, the Loss of Truth and Peace, and the utter Extinction of Charity among us. What some People may think of a Procedure which draws after it a Train of *such Consequences*, I know not; but will venture to say, all the Wit and Ingenuity in the Nation will never reconcile it with *holy living*. Sure I am, such as bring into the Church strange Doctrines, and cause Divisions in it, are called by St. Paul, *Carnal*, 1 Cor. iii. 4. *evil Workers*, Phil. iii. 2. *deceitful Workers*, 2 Cor. xi. 13. and *disorderly Walkers*, in another Place, 2 Thess. iii. 6. And why those who are called *so* by an Apostle, should be by *us* called, *absolutely good Livers*, I must needs own I am at a loss to understand, and leave you, Sir, to consider. And though I am far from presuming to judge any in regard to his eternal State, yet, when I consider with what Severity the fore-mentioned Disorders stand censured, and how the Authors or the wilful Abettors of them are stigmatized in the Word of God, I cannot but doubt *for these things he will bring them into Judgment*. And, per-

haps, it may be found as hard to render an Account of *these*, as of *some other* Sins, which are esteemed *grosser*, and more *scandalous*. A thing, Sir, which I heartily wish you would lay to heart, and reflect seriously upon.

Let us now, Sir, if you please, go on to consider the Lives of the *common Professors* on both Sides. Upon this Head, though you always speak in Terms of great Moderation, others triumph over us without Mercy; but with little Reason, as, I hope, will plainly appear, when all fitting *Allowances* and *Deductions* have been made.

I must therefore protest against owning some for Members of the Church of *England*, who now, (I am afraid) pass with *you* for such; Scepticks, Infidels, Libertines, and Rakes, Sharpers, Bullies, and blasphemous Gamesters, and a great Part of the *Beau Monde*, who never go to Church (if ever they *do* go) with the least Thought or Intention to serve God, or to profit by the Instructions they receive there, and will go as readily to a Meeting, wherever they have the same Reasons for going thither. I must also be bold to exclude many of your *Tip-top People*, who are too high and great to mind any Religion, or to care what becomes of it. All these (I suppose) are called *ours*, because they are not *yours*; and they may be as well called *yours*, because they are not *ours*.

There is one thing, I imagine, which helps a good deal to make such disorderly People pass, in common Estimation, rather for *ours* than *yours*; and that is, their being more frequently and instantly applied to, admonished, and reprov'd, in order to reclaim them, by the Clergy, than by Dissenting Ministers. When there are any Persons of debauched Principles, or of loose Morals in a Parish,
and

and who behave themselves notoriously and scandalously there, it is expected by all, that the Parish Minister should, and he thinks himself bound to deal with them, to shew them their Error, or their Sin. He considers every Man in his Parish, let him be what he will, whether Libertine or Infidel, whether Papist or Protestant Dissenter, nay, though he were a Jew, Mahometan, or Heathen, as one of the Souls committed to his Care at his Institution, and thinks himself obliged, as he really is, *ex officio*, to instruct and admonish him, as he has Opportunity, and make such pastoral Applications to him, as his Case requires. But no body looks for this from the Dissenting Minister *in* the Place, nor does he think himself concerned, as indeed he is not, (otherwise, I mean, that in the way of brotherly Admonition and Reproof, such as one Christian Neighbour owes another) with any, besides those who *own* him for their Pastor, and *profess* themselves willing to walk with him in Christian Ordinances. Hence (as I said) it comes to pass, that this sort of Men are commonly thought to have some Relation to the Church more than to the Meeting; though, in truth and reality, they are related to both alike, that is, indeed, to neither. Perhaps it will be said, they *call* themselves Churchmen, and talk for the Church. Not all of them, I presume. Some of them do not *pretend* to be of *our* Church, and *talk always against it*, whilst others *are* of your Churches, and always *talk for* them. For there are, Sir, Dissenting Infidels, as well as Libertines, to my Knowledge. And it is remarkable; that the whole Tribe of Infidels have a particular Spite at the Church and Clergy, while you are *well* with them. They do *our* Clergy the greatest Honour by always *railing* at them, while they *dis honour* your Ministers with their *Panegyrics*. What
are

are their Motives to this different Treatment of *you* and *us*, it, surely, concerns you, Sir, and may be worth your while to enquire.

But what, if after all, *every one of these* should be pleased to call themselves *Churchmen*?—Suppose, I should have a Fancy to call myself a Patient of Sir *Hans's*, and pique myself for having so great a Man for my Physician, while, perhaps, I never consulted him in all my Life, or, if I did, would never take the Medicines he ordered, nor follow the Methods he prescribed. Am I therefore his Patient? And is the Doctor to answer for all the Infirmities and Distempers I have about me, or his Skill in Physic to be questioned, on account of my ill Health? I hope not. So, if a profligate immoral Wretch, who takes effectual Care not to be the better for the Church, by seldom or never coming at it; or, when he happens to be there, not minding, but rather disdaining and casting behind him all the Instructions that are given him, shall, nevertheless, take it into his Head, for some foolish Reason he may have to himself, to call himself a *Churchman*, Is he therefore a *Churchman*? And is the Church accountable for all the Crimes and Disorders of his Life? I desire to know the Reason why.—In a word, none should be esteemed Members of the Church, nor the Church accountable for any, but such as own its Authority, submit to its Orders and Rules of Discipline, and frequent its Worship. And when *all the rest* have been *thrown out*, and some *reasonable*, but very *small* Allowances have been made for *these*, the Comparison, I verily believe, will end not at all to *our* Disadvantage.

It is a thing confessed, and by ^a *your* Author, Sir, among others; and none, I think, will have

the Face to deny it, (unless, perchance, it were some fiery Papist, such as *Bellarmino*, who says, *In the Catholic Church there are some bad Men, but, among the Heretics, not one good, no, not one*) I say it is owned, and cannot be denied, that *there are, in the Church of England, many holy Souls, who are of the first Rank in the School of Christ, Men who walk humbly with God in all the known Duties of the Christian State, who are dear to him, and whose Names have an honourable Place in the Book of Life.* And give me leave to observe, that these, for the generality, are the strictest and most zealous Members of the Church, not who *talk most* for it, and *cry it up most*, but who *reverence* it most, and live in the greatest *Subjection* to it. Which is just the *reverse* of what we see in the Church of *Rome*, where the best and holiest Men are observed to be commonly such, as have the *least* regard for the *peculiar* Doctrines and Practices of their Church, and are indeed but half Catholics. A pretty good Argument in my opinion, that the Doctrine of that Church is *unholy*, that of our Church *holy*, such as, far from undermining and destroying (as your Author injuriously pretends) does really further and promote all manner of Holiness of Life.

It is not to be thought, that t^{he} Christian Doctrine, though in its utmost Purity, will make all, who profess to receive and embrace it, good Christians; nor is it pretended that all the Members of our Church are such; it is too evident there are, among us many *national* Christians, as there are also among *you*. And if it prove true, that there are not *quite so many* even in proportion, we shall not wonder at *that*, if we do but consider the different Circumstances *you* and *we* are under. Those who have *no* Religion, but nevertheless, for their Credit's sake among their Neighbours, or other Reasons of the like sort, are obliged to profess *some*, will fall, on
course,

course, into the established Church, unless they are determined, which indeed often happens, by some particular Views and Interests, to go another Way, and join themselves to some Party of Dissenters: Not because the Doctrine or Discipline of the Church is more indulgent, or better suited to the Consciences and Lives of these Men, but because it is the Religion *by Law established*, the *public and national*, the most general, and therefore esteemed the most *fashionable* Religion. Such sort of Men always affect to be in the *most and best Company*: They love the beaten, the *high Road*, whether it be of Truth or Error, and would have been Presbyterians or Independants (or, perhaps, any thing else) if *their* Religions had been as long the Establishment as ours, and as much followed.

Let us, if you please, suppose the Church and Monarchy, after the great Rebellion and Usurpation, had never been restored, and your Presbyterians or congregational Men (for I know not well, Sir, which of those Names you *like best* to be called by, but take which of them you please) put the case, I say, that either of these had continued in Possession of the Churches and public Revenues, and either of their Systems had been the Religion of the Magistrate, and the legal Establishment to this day: In this case, we I (dare say) *the Episcopal Party of the Church of England*, if we had not been quite rooted out, as *not fit to be tolerated*, (which indeed is most likely) should have been made, before now, the *sober Party*, and you, with all your supposed *Advantages and Obligations*, would have been as much below us in Strictness and Holiness of Life, as *we now are*, or are *supposed* to be, below you. I am ready to think it *so* all the Christian World over.—The inferior tolerated Sects in other Countries did not, generally, set up, as they

they did here, under Pretences of greater Purity of Life, but only of greater Purity of Doctrine; and yet, the Followers of these, I guess, will be found, for the most part, to walk more orderly, than those of the established Religion of the Country. The public established national Religion, wherever it be, most abounds with mere *nominal* Professors; and, in the Nature of Things, it cannot well be otherwise: For those who are *void* of Religion, and (as we say) have it *to choose*, will naturally *choose* (as I said before) that which is *uppermost*, which the *great People* generally profess, and *they* can therefore profess with most Credit, Security, and Advantage.

I know it has been suggested, that the Church of *Scotland* is an Exception to *this*; nor will I pretend to be *Scotsman* enough to speak decisively to the Point. But, according to all the Information I have received, there is, among the Episcopal Party, if not so much of the *form*, yet not less of the *power* of Godliness, and if less *Enthusiasm*, yet quite as much of *real* and *substantial* Religion, as there is among the Presbyterians of that Nation. *Enthusiasm*, Sir, which the latter (they say) both Ministers and People, have a peculiar Turn and Disposition to, and are in a high Degree, possessed with, is a glorious thing: The glare of it dazzles the Eyes of the weak and ignorant: It passes with *them* for *Sanctity of Life*, or an infallible mark of it; when it neither *is that*, nor, perhaps, is *accompanied* with it. However, considering *in the most favourable light* those Appearances of Zeal and Devotion, and supposing there *is*, among *them*, as much *real Religion* and *genuine Piety*, as there may seem to any one to be, we ought to remember, that it was but Yesterday, in Comparison, that *they* were *hoisted up* into an *Establishment*, and the Episcopalians *brought under* them: And we may suppose, the spirit of

an Establishment, and that of an inferior discouraged Sect, is not yet quite worn out of *either*, as, perchance, in a little longer tract of time, may be the Case of *both* of them.

And now, Sir, give me leave to consider the Lives of Dissenters, which I promise you to do with all the Tenderness and Reserve that the Nature of my Design will permit. I can bear you record, that there are *many* like yourself, who are *in earnest* in Religion; and most of you, perhaps, have a *Zeal* for it, *of one sort or other*. I don't wonder at it; For few, besides such (as I intimated before) care to be of an underling Sect, and these, especially if they are Persons of some particular Complexions, run naturally into it; and the more, if it *be*, or rather *has lately been*, in any degree, oppressed. This, indeed, is not *quite* your Case, now, in this Nation: You are upon a footing with the rest of his Majesty's Subjects, as to all worldly Advantages that I can think of, except your being excluded (*so far as the Laws can exclude you*) from public Trusts and Employments, (of which I have spoken already) and the Charge some of you are at to maintain your own Ministers; which, however, is but a Trifle, and made up to you abundantly by the mighty Advantages you reap from your firm, and almost *inviolable Attachment* to all the secular Interests of each other: For this, Sir, is observed of you *all*, but of the Quakers above *all* others. A great Part of you, however most of the elder sort, if they are not *themselves* under any Oppression, are yet the Children of those who did undergo, it is true, some Inconveniencies on a religious Account. And therefore, considering the many Lessons of Piety they are presumed to have had from their zealous Parents, may be justly expected to excel the bulk and generality of Churchmen, in the Goodness and Holiness of
their

their Lives: And yet, after all, (excluding those whom I before excluded) the difference is not, at present, *very great*, hardly *any*, so far as *my* Observation goes. And, whoever lives to see it, will probably find all Distinction between Churchmen and Dissenters, from their Lives, absolutely lost in another Generation, unless Persecution and Tribulation, which you plainly want as well as we, should arise, to stir up and re-kindle the Sparks of practical Religion and Goodness, which are ready to die away, both among *you* and *us*. The present State of Dissenters, I rather chuse to set forth in the Words of *your* Author, than in *my own*, as they may be more acceptable to *you*, and less liable to any Charge or Suspicion of undue Representation or Aggravation.

^a He plainly intimates, *You have laid aside some peculiar laudable Practices of your Ancestors, the ancient Non-conformists; whereby they had gained an honourable Character, and great Reputation in the Nation; that you, like others, too much indulge yourselves in, and give a loose to the gayer Vanities; and all the perilous, if not unlawful Diversions of the Age; that you affect, like your Neighbours, all the Luxuries of Life, in your Dress and Furniture, Food, Equipage, and Attendance; whereby infamous Bankruptcies are become frequent among you, and hardly reckoned any Crime; and that, as to keeping regular Hours for the various Duties to God and Man, abstaining from vain Company, from Taverns, and public Houses, and much Wine, preserving better Order in Families, and maintaining the daily Worship of God there, there has been for the last threescore or fourscore Years, as great, or greater Degeneracy, in proportion, reigning and visible among you, than among your conforming Neighbours.* These things, it is true, are delivered

^a *Humble Attempt*, p. 227, &c.

here and there, mostly in the form of *Queries* put to your Consciences. But whoever understands the Force of Language, as this Gentleman does, (no body better, to be sure) must know, that *Queries so put*, are as strong, as plain and positive Assertions.

It is possible, Sir, such Circumstances and Considerations as the foregoing, might not be actually present to your Thoughts, before I had suggested them : But you have Discernment and Penetration enough to enter easily and thoroughly into them, which, I doubt, the greatest Part of Dissenters cannot do : They are used to look only on the Surface of Things ; and because they see most of their Way keep the Lord's Day in a *severer* (I was going to say a more *Judaical*) manner, than many of those who go to the Churches do, they presently conclude their Lives are better in the whole ; and hence are easily led to think of their Religion more highly than they ought to think. I will therefore suppose, for Argument's sake, that they *do* live better Lives than we, as much better as you please ; and see whether any Conclusion can fairly be drawn from thence, in favour of *your Churches*.

I must say, if this Principle, *The better Life, always the better Religion*, be true, it is a most useful one ; not less useful than the Doctrine of implicate Faith among the Papists : For as *that* Doctrine, thoroughly imbibed, saves *them* abundance of Trouble, in examining the several Doctrines of Religion, so *this* will save *us* as much, in trying the Merits of the several Parties in Religion, in order to determine ourselves which of them to be of. If it be true, what have we (Fools!) been doing, one Party of Christians against another, for so many Centuries of Years ? Some of us have been disputing, and writing Books of Controversy, and the whole World will

will hardly contain them. We have been proving, each of us, from Scripture, Reason, Antiquity, and I know not what Topics besides, that our own Religion is the best ; and we are now (for what I can see) no nearer an end of these Controversies than at the beginning. Others have been as much employed in reading the Books that have been written, and scrutinizing the Religions that have been offered to them, have gone from Sect to Sect, in order to prove all things, but have never been able to hold fast any thing, to fix and settle all their Lives long ; or if they have settled, it has often been in the most *wrong* Way they could have taken : Whereas, here is a short and compendious Way we have at last hit upon, to be *presently* and *certainly* in the right. We need only lie by a while, watching the Lives and Manners of the several Churches or Sects in Religion, to see which are best, and then choose our Religion accordingly.

This Way to find out the true Church and Religion is so easy and convenient, that, methinks, one is strangely prejudiced in its Favour, and cannot help wishing it were the *right* and *safe* Way to bring us to it. But alas ! Sir, alas ! we cannot open our Eyes, without seeing it is *wrong*, and will *mislead* us : For do you not see, all about you, how little the Lives of Men correspond and agree with their Religion ; that some live *better*, who have a *worse* Religion, and some again *worse*, who have a *better* ? Are not the *Lives* of Quakers (for example) in your own Opinion, as innocent and inoffensive, and every Way as good as those of other Dissenters, particularly those of your *own* Denomination ? But you don't think their *Religion* so good by a great deal. I suppose, you think them better than those of Churchmen : But do you hold their Religion to be better, and to come nearer true and
genuine

genuine Christianity ? I question that very much ; nay, I am pretty confident of the contrary, and that, were you to quit your own Religion, or could you have no Opportunity for the Exercise of it, and *must be* either Churchman or Quaker, you would certainly choose, without the least Scruple, or one Moment's hesitating, to be the Churchman. It is commonly said, that the *Lives* of Protestants are by no means answerable to the *Power* and *Purity* of their *Principles*, and those who know the World have thought, they are but little, if any thing, better, (taking them all together) than those of Papists. Nay, in the very Infancy of the Reformation, some of the Reformers did not scruple to pronounce and describe them *worse* : Though I own too, the Complaints of pious and zealous Men of the Wickedness of those under their Charge, in order to reform them, are not always *historically just*, but rather declamatory aggravated Descriptions, not to be interpreted too strictly. Their Time and Zeal for many Years, were wholly employed in reforming the *Doctrines* of the Church, and they were not at leisure to mind the *Discipline* thereof, and the *Manners* of the People. And therefore, I imagine, they were, *then*, and perhaps have been *ever since*, pretty much like those of their Popish Neighbours. And yet, we are all agreed, there is a vast Difference, in Point of Purity and Goodness, between the Religion of Papists and of Protestants, even that of the Church of *England*, as much Malevolence as some of you have against it. And if, from *Sects* and *Societies* of Christians, we should come to *particular* Persons, (and why should we not?) some we shall find, within the Pale of the *same* Church, taught and believing the *same* Doctrines, and partaking of the *same* Ordinances, excellently good and holy Men, while others are void of all Holiness,

and,

and, perhaps, unholy and profane.—In a word, were we to chuse our Religion by examining, not the Doctrines and Practices thereof, but the Lives of its Professors, we should be soon in a Maze, and in danger of falling into the grossest Errors. And, truly, I don't know but a less stedfast and sincere Christian than yourself might be in some danger of losing his very Christianity.

For yourself, Sir, I am satisfied you are a Christian upon thorough Conviction, and that nothing can move you from the Faith of the Gospel, and your blessed Hope in the Lord *Jesus*. But suppose you were not so good a Christian as you are, suppose you were hanging in a State of Suspence, or of Neutrality and Indifference about Religion, and had your own yet to seek, God above knows, whither this Principle, if your Mind were thoroughly possessed with it, might carry you. If you had lived in *India* in the Days of the old *Gymnosophists*, or in *Gaul* and *Britain* in the Days of our *Druids*, you might have been easily drawn in to their Superstitions and Idolatries, by your Admiration of their Lives, and their continual Contemplation of Divine Things. If you were now in *China* or *Japan*, the Continnence and Sobriety of the *Bonzes* might induce you to entertain a good Opinion of their God *Fo*; or if in *Siam*, the more exemplary Lives of the *Talapoins* there, their perpetual Silence, refraining from public Spectacles and Diversions, Watchings and Fastings, with other Rigours and Austerities practised upon their Bodies, their Temperance and Chastity, their Contempt of the World, and their continual preaching from Morning to Night, would probably convince you the true Religion was with *them*, and make you a devout Worshipper of *Somonocodom*. But, if these Suppositions are too odious, I will suppose
you

you a Christian of the Apostles Days ; and then, in all probability, you would have sided with those who *forbad to marry, and commanded to abstain from Meats*, and thought the Apostles themselves took and gave more Liberty than they ought, and walked too much according to the Flesh. If you had been a Christian of the primitive Times, it is ten to one but you would have renounced the Communion of the Catholic Church, and been a *Montanist*, an *Encratite*, a *Priscilianist*, or one of those other Hereticks, who insulted the Church for its Want of Discipline, and the Members of it for their want of Strictness and Purity of Life, and, to say Truth, did *really outdo* them, in *Strictnesses of all sorts*, more than any of *you* can pretend to outdo *us* of the Church of *England*. And truly, Sir, I have somewhat wondered that, considering the Road of Thinking you are in, you have not yet gone over to some other Sect, that is more refined and spiritual than your own. Pardon me, Sir, if I speak freely to you upon this Occasion: I am somewhat jealous over you, lest, as you think the Truth and Goodness of any Religion is to be estimated by the Goodness and Spirituality of its Professors, you should be inclined to leave your *present Way*, and to embrace the *Methodism* of Mr. *Whitfield*, which I think *worse*: For *he* and his Associates do certainly preach up, and pretend to *practise*, greater Spiritualities and Abstractions from the World, than those of *your Way* do. Perhaps, you may think those extraordinary things which they pretend to, such as wholly abstaining from indifferent things as unlawful, renouncing the common Enjoyments of the World, the irrational Liberalities to the Poor, which they so much cry up, and leaving their Stations in the World to follow,

every

every where, the Preachers of these high-strained Doctrines, are no Parts of Christian Holiness. I readily grant you they are *not*: But then, you may please to consider, whether *some* things, whereby *your* People have gained the Character of extraordinary Sanctity above their Neighbours, and particularly, that over-rigorous and precise way of keeping the Lord's Day, which *many* of you affect, be any *Parts* of the Holiness of a Christian, or only the *Guises* and *Semblances* thereof. And I should think you might as easily mistake some of *his* Instances of *Over-righteousness*, for *real Holiness*, as *that* I have just now mentioned. And indeed, this is certain, that those who measure the Goodness of all Religions by the Goodness of those who profess them, are always exceedingly apt to mistake such things for Christian Holiness, and have commonly done it. And that Mistake has been the Occasion of many a Schism in the Church.

This was one of the Causes (as I intimated in the beginning of my Letter) of the great Increase and multiplying of Sects, when the Church of *England* was removed, in the Days of our Forefathers. And some of *your* Writers, particularly old Mr. *Baxter*, whom I mention, because I know you have a great Regard for his Judgment and Authority, as well as Reverence for his Memory, saw this, and endeavoured to guard People against it. Though, by the way too, you will allow me to say, no body, in the days of Prelacy, *strove* more than he, or *contributed* more to draw them away from the Church, by declaiming against the Looseness and Dissoluteness of its Members, and magnifying the Godliness of the Sectaries. However, *afterwards*, when he found this way of thinking and talking turned against himself and his own

Party, to make farther Divisions and Subdivisions from it, he quickly came into more reasonable and sober Sentiments. *Then* he set up for curing the Divisions of the Church: And one of the Cures he^a prescribes is, *to take heed, lest you be tempted to reject a good Cause, because it is owned by some bad Persons; or to like a bad Cause, when it is owned by Men that are otherwise good; and that you judge not of the Faith and Cause by the Persons, when you should judge of the Persons rather by the Faith and Cause.* He does not dispute, but that great numbers of the best sort of Men may be, and frequently are, in great Errors: *For it often falls out* (says he) *that honest People are like straying Sheep; if one leaps over the Hedge, the rest strive to follow.* And, on the other side, *the worst sort of Men often hold fast the Truth.* And he shews, from the common Workings of human Nature, how it comes to be so. Some stand up for the Truth, because it is the Religion of their *King and Country.* Some make it a *Point of Honour* (a mistaken Point of Honour, I confess) not to depart from it, because it was *the Religion of their Forefathers*, and what they had the good Luck to be brought up in. Some again stick to it for the Peace and Quiet of their Consciences, which though none of the best, cannot, perhaps, brook an Opposition to, or Departure from it, when it is known and manifest. Others defend it, as it gives them an Opportunity to display their *Wit and Learning.* And there are those, doubtless, who defend it, that they may have it to throw in the Teeth of those, to disgrace and lessen them, who, otherwise, are better Men than themselves, but happen in that Point, to be erroneous.—See, Sir, how many Reasons there are

^a *Cure of Church Divisions, Direct. 43.*

in human Nature, were we to go no farther, for *bad Men's* adhering, as they often do, to the *best* Religion. And *some* of these Reasons, or, at least, *all together*, I should hope, might fairly account, with you, for such Mens living in the Communion of the Church, and being zealous for it, without any Disgrace to the Church itself, and without any Occasion given for our being put in Mind that *the Tree is known by its Fruits*.

I mention now, Sir, that *Aphorism* of our Lord, because, I remember, you were pleased to apply it, as I have heard others do, to this Subject; and I, *then*, neglected, I know not how, to say any thing to it.—Yes, Sir, our Lord does say, and he had it often in his Mouth, that *the Tree is known by its Fruits*. False Prophets, he says, are known by their Fruits; and false Churches, say I, are known by *theirs*. But what are those Fruits? Perhaps you will say, it cannot be their Doctrines, because their Doctrines are the things we are to judge *of*, not the things we are to judge *by*. But there is no Absurdity, that I can see, in judging *of* some *by* others; *of* those Doctrines which they openly profess and publicly avow, and which they, *at first*, propose to you to bring you over to, *by* those (generally more mischievous) which they *afterwards* labour to infuse into you, but would not venture to trust you with, till they had got you in their Power, and made sure of you: A common way (they say) of dealing with new Converts in the Church of *Rome*. Or, perhaps, by the *Fruits* we are to know them by, our Saviour means the *Views* with which they propagate their Doctrines, (which, if you wait a while, or watch them narrowly, will plainly appear) and the Uses to which they, *afterwards*, apply them, such (for instance) as getting a Power over the

Consciences of the People, keeping them in a slavish Subjection to themselves, or preparing them for any mischievous or rebellious Enterprize; or else, filling their own Pockets, enriching their Church, and promoting the Ends of worldly Greatness and Dominion. But if you still insist they are the Actions of their Lives that are here meant, I shall not contend with you, provided you mean such Actions, as the Principles and Doctrines they teach *naturally* tend to, and have a *direct Influence* to produce. But if you mean other Actions which those Principles and Doctrines have no tendency to, or influence upon, they are not the Fruits which our Saviour means the Tree was to be known by. By such Actions you can no more know what their Religion is, whether good or bad, than you can know the Goodness of any Tree in your Garden, by observing the Fruit of an Ivy that happens to twine about it. If (for Example) a Papist assassinates his natural and lawful Prince, being a Protestant, that Act of his is such as his Religion may be known by, because his Religion *excites* him to, and *warrants* him to do it. But if he picks your Pocket, steals out of your House, or robs you upon the Highway, those Acts are not the Fruits whereby his Religion can be known, because, bad as it is, it encourages nothing, that I know of, of that Nature.

You will permit me, Sir, to pursue our Saviour's Similitude a little farther, in hopes of deriving somewhat more Light upon this Subject. He certainly means no more, because no more is true, than that a *good* Tree will bring forth *good* Fruit, *if nothing external hinders*; for otherwise, it may produce very *bad*, or *none at all*. Be it ever so good in its own Nature, the very best *sui generis*, if it be planted after a wrong manner, in an improper Soil, or an unfriendly Climate, there may be *no* Fruit, or what

is may be very poor and bad, or some accidental Blast coming upon it may destroy it all in the Blossom. In like manner, the *best* Religion will infallibly produce the *best* Practice, when there is nothing to *obstruct* its Operation. But Circumstances often keep it from doing so. Custom, Education, natural Complexion, and other things, hinder its Effect, on particular Persons. And, with regard to whole Churches, the particular Situations they may be placed in, such as Security or Danger, Prosperity or Adversity, a peaceful or troubled State of public Affairs, the good or the bad Examples of Princes and great Men, and many other things of a like nature, will always hinder or promote the Efficacy of its Doctrines upon the Lives of Men. And, therefore, you see, that under the same Constitution of Religion, under the Profession of the same Doctrines and Opinions, People, in different Times and Places, live very differently, now, or here, in a more loose and dissolute, then, or there, in a stricter manner, as these Circumstances happen to influence and determine. Nay, it is sometimes seen, that Religion, in a very corrupt and degenerate State, where all Circumstances of this Nature are very favourable to its Interests, produces as great Effects, and makes Men live as virtuously, and, perhaps, more so, than it does under such Circumstances as are unfavourable to it, where it is professed in much greater Purity.

After all, Sir, I would not be thought universally to assert, that the Goodness or Badness of Mens Lives is a Matter of no Consideration at all, in making a Judgment concerning the Truth or Goodness of any Religion. I allow it to have Place, and to be also of considerable Weight in the Question between Christianity and other Religions *fundamentally false*, as the *Mahometan*, and much more
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the *Pagan*, in its various Forms and Shapes. There is not only a *visible*, but a *great* Difference between the Lives of Christians, and of the Professors of those Religions, much to the Honour of Christendom, whatever some devout and well-meaning Christians, while they were only *declaiming*, and not speaking *critically* of Things, have *incautiously* said, or some of our Infidels have *slily* and *maliciously* pretended to the contrary. For not only the Bulk and Generality of Christians are much freer from all gross Vices and shameful Enormities, but vast Multitudes of them, even in these Days, degenerate as they are, have, by the Power and Efficacy of the Christian Doctrine (for what else should it be done by?) been raised to such a Perfection of Holiness, as, I am pretty sure, none of the other sort ever attained to, or, perhaps, have had any notion of. And this, I readily grant you, is a legitimate Presumption, if it be nothing more, that the *Gospel of Christ is the Word of God, and the Power of God unto Salvation* : And if your Faith in it has been hereby established and confirmed, as mine, I am free to profess to you, has greatly been, you need not, I think, be ashamed. But then, Sir, I can never admit, that the Merits of the different Sects and Denominations of Christians, all holding the Head, and agreeing in Fundamentals, can be rationally estimated this Way. The great Principles of natural Religion, and those of the Gospel Dispensation, are the Things whereby, in the main, our Lives are formed and fashioned ; and these, we may reasonably expect, will operate in an *uniform* and *equal* Manner, and have an Effect *pretty nigh the same* in Christians of all sorts, who do sincerely and cordially embrace them ; and the external Forms they disagree in, are not like to make any Difference that is considerable. Nay, Sir, I will
venture

venture to say, that where the great Principles of our holy Religion have been mixed and adulterated with many impure and pernicious Doctrines, as they have been in the Church of *Rome*, their Influence has not been weakened thereby in any such degree as will easily fall under common Notice and Observation. Whether the Members of that Church do not commonly *discern* the Genius and Tendency of their *peculiar* Doctrines, or whether, *discerning* it, they are not, by the superior and over-ruling Influence of the great Articles of Faith, which they embrace and profess in common with us, kept from pursuing it in their Practice, or whether they are not happy above *us* in some Circumstances, whereby the evil Tendency of their peculiar Doctrines may, in a good measure, be counter-balanced, whatever be the Reason, there is not, so far as appears to me, in *their* Lives and *ours*, or indeed those of any Sorts of Christians we are acquainted with, any such Difference as that an Argument can be rationally grounded upon it, in behalf of *one* against *another*. And where, in the Variety of Sects, there is a plain and discernible Difference, it will never be, I am fully persuaded, found greater, than may be accounted for, by surveying the *Circumstances* and *State of Things* they live respectively under, such as those I have been just now pointing out to you.

And now, I hope, it appears, that this Principle, *That is the best Religion, or Way of Religion, the Professors of which live best*, which is of such favourite Consideration with *you*, is absolutely false: And, though I am persuaded there is no need to say any thing more, yet one thing *I cannot refrain* from saying, to put you farther out of Conceit with it. Sir, it is a pitiful Piece of Popery. You will find it in *Bellarmino*, and other Popish Writers. It is
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the same thing, in other Words, with one of *his Notes* of the true Church. *Sanctity of Life*, according to *him*, is an *infallible Mark*, whereby the *true Church* is to be known. And he bears you in Hand, this Mark is only to be found upon his *own*. The Emissaries also of that Church never fail to employ it to make Profelytes among us. They are evermore magnifying the *Prayers* and *Devotions*, the *Watchings*, the *Fastings*; the *Mortifications*, the *Charities*, and the *Contempt of the World*, which so many Men and Women, in *their* Church, have been eminent for; and this is one of the surest Baits those *Fishers of Men* have to catch Protestants. And, therefore, I hope we shall at length be wiser than to use, and, by using, *authorise* and *give credit* to an Argument, which has been so *often*, and so *successfully* turned against ourselves.

I heartily wish, Sir, as I am confident you also do, that this Mark of Sanctity may be more visible than it is on *their*, and *all* the Churches of God; *that they may all be so guided and governed by his good Spirit, that all who profess, and call themselves Christians, may be led into the Way of Truth, and hold the Faith in the Unity of the Spirit, in the Bond of Peace, and in Righteousness of Life.* And as to yourself, Sir, I should esteem it, I do assure you, no inconsiderable Article in the Happiness of my Life, could I be a means of leading you to act according to the whole Tenor of those good Words in the Prayers of our Church which we offer up daily, in your Behalf; I mean, could I prevail with you *to hold the Faith, in the Unity of the Spirit, and the Bond of Peace, as you do in Righteousness of Life already.*

I am,

Yours I R,

Your Humble Servant,

A SECOND
LETTER

To a Gentleman dissenting from the
CHURCH of *ENGLAND*,
CONCERNING
THE LIVES
OF

Churchmen and Dissenters.

WHEREIN
The great and popular Pleas of Dissenters
against Communion with the Church are
refuted, and reflected back upon them-
selves.

By JOHN WHITE, B. D.
Sometime Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge.

Ex ore tuo —

*Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that
Thing which he alloweth. Rom. xiv. 22.*

L O N D O N,
Printed for C. DAVIS, against *Gray's Inn*, *Holbourn*,
W. CRAIGHTON at *Ipswich*; and
M. COOPER in *Pater-Noster-Row*.

MDCCXLV.

[Price One Shilling ~~1s. 6d.~~]

BOOKS Printed for C. DAVIS.

A LETTER to a Gentleman Dissenting from he Church of *England*, concerning the Lives of Churchmen and Dissenters. Wherein Dr. *Watts's* Book, entitled *An humble Attempt towards the Revival of Practical Religion among Christians*, so far as relates to this Subject, is largely examined; and the popular Argument (or Prejudice) arising from the *supposed* or *real* better Lives of DISSENTERS, in favour of their Churches, is fully considered. By JOHN WHITE, B. D. Sometime Fellow of St. *John's* College, *Cambridge*.

A VINDICATION of the Government, Doctrine, and Worship of the Church of *England*, establish'd in the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, against the injurious Reflections of Mr. *Neal*, in his late History of the Puritans. Together with a Detection of many false Quotations and Mistakes in that Performance. By the Right Rev. Father in God ISAAC, Lord Bishop of *Worcester*. Octavo.

THE Reader is advertised that the Words [*concerning the Lives of Churchmen and Dissenters*] were inserted in the Title Page and in the Running Title at the top of the Leaf, by mistake of the Printer, the Lives of Churchmen and Dissenters not being the Subject of *this* as they were of the former Letter. He is also desired to read P. 6. l. 18. *add* instead of *had*, P. 10. l. 1. *Aposfile* instead of *Apostles*, P. 7. l. 20. *his* instead of *is*.

PREFACE.

THERE being no greater Impropriety that I can perceive in introducing a *Letter* than a general Discourse with a *Preface*, especially a *long Letter* with a *short Preface*, I shall no more scruple to introduce *this*, than I did the *former*, in that Manner. — The Title Page intimates, that it is both *defensive* and *offensive*. In the defensive Part, wherein I undertake to vindicate the establish'd Church a-

gainst the great and popular Objections of Dissenters, I am generally brief, *that* having already been executed by much abler Pens, and particularly, by the *London Divines* in the *Collection of Cases and other Discourses to recover Dissenters to the Communion of the Church of England*. But in the other Part, wherein I *retort* their Objections, and shew them as strongly conclusive against Communion with *their own Churches*, I have enlarged more, few, I think, if any, at least, professedly, and in a set Treatise, having gone before me in *that* way. The *turning* thus *their Artillery upon their own Heads* will be allowed, I suppose, fair War, a justifiable and reasonable

nable Treatment of an Adversary, and, perhaps, is the right way of treating those we have to do with, although, hitherto, in my humble Opinion, too much neglected by our Writers. When we urge them with Scripture, they find ways to darken and pervert it; and when with Reasoning, they make a Shift, to oppose ours with some Counter-reasonings of their own, which, however deceitful or inconclusive, may pass, and fatally impose upon the weak, or the unattentive. But when they are plainly shewn to have in *their* Churches the same Blemishes or Defects with which they upbraid ours, and to do the same Things, or Things tantamount with those for which
they

they profess to withdraw themselves from its Communion, they must be very obstinate and perverse, if they are not taken down, and put effectually to Silence.

It might be, perhaps, worth ones while to take some Pains upon this Argument, if it were only to embarrass them, and stop their Mouths, and keep them, in time to come, from attacking the Church with these Objections in so *triumphant* a Manner as they are wont to do. But I had a farther and more important View in it, namely, to set before them *a plain Argument for Conformity, which has, hitherto, been very little, if at all, pressed upon them.* For if all our Churches are alike or equally faulty and defective,

fective, why should they make it a greater Difficulty to conform to the established, than to any other? Nay, in this Case, it will be their Duty to conform rather to the Church established by Law, and the general National Religion, than, in manifest Violation of all the Laws of Christian Communion, to join themselves to any small tolerated Sect, formed and set up in open Rivalship and Opposition to it; and no other conduct can be esteemed either *Rational* or *Christian*.

I am very sensible, such an Attempt as the present is liable to be construed, as if it were a charge of, and a design to expose their want of Honesty and Sincerity.

But

But there is no necessity for such a Construction. I am free to own, many of their Inconsistencies and Self-condemnations here discovered, and, perhaps, most of them, may be charitably accounted for by the want only of common Attention and Reflection. But if *this* Charge or Imputation be also esteemed disobliging, I cant help it. Thus much however, I can say, some care has been taken that it might not be made *more disobliging than it is in itself*, by *my* manner of pursuing it.

A SECOND
LETTER
CONCERNING
THE LIVES
OF

Churchmen and Dissenters, &c.

S I R,

ALTHOUGH I knew you too well to entertain the *least* doubt of your taking in good Part my sincere and well-meant Endeavours, in my former Letter, to serve you in your highest Interest, I yet found it a very sensible Pleasure to be assured of it from yourself. And what added much to my Pleasure, was, your free and ingenuous Confession, that tho' I was not so fortunate, as to give you entire Satisfaction in every Point I had occasion to touch upon, yet I had done it in some, and, particularly, had extorted from you your *old Prejudice*, which always

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hung

2 *A second Letter concerning the Lives of*
hung about you, and you had been extremely
fond of, to wit, that *that Religion is to be always*
esteemed best, the Professors of which are observed
to live best, and to be most sober, regular, and ex-
emplary in their Conversations. This, thought I to
myself, is a very material Point gained; and I was
sanguine enough to expect you would have pre-
sently declared for Conformity. But these Ex-
pectations were soon dampt, upon your further
saying, that *tho' the better Lives of Dissenters had*
greatly confirmed you in your Non-conformity, more,
indeed, than you now perceive there was Reason for,
they never had been the sole ground or Reason of it,
but that the Exceptions against Conformity commonly
urged by your Writers, tho', indeed, they did not ap-
pear to you to prove it sinful, yet seemed weighty
enough to determine you against it, especially, when
there were other Churches you might communicate
withal, which were not liable to those Exceptions; but
that, if it could be shewn, the dissenting Churches
were really liable to the same, or the like Exceptions,
and your Reasons against Conformity to the established
Church could be fairly thrown back upon your own,
you should then think it your Duty, in regard to the
Peace of God's Church, to conform rather to the na-
tional Establishment, than to join with any separate
Congregation; and that, in such a Case, you would
certainly do it. This Declaration raised me again;
and indeed is the thing which has drawn upon
you this second Trouble.

It falls out, Sir, that some Thoughts I had
published, Years ago, in three or four loose Pa-
pers, might, in some Measure, answer the pre-
sent Occasion, the Drift of those Papers being
to shew, in divers Particulars, that your Reasons
against

against Conformity to the Church equally press upon yourselves : But, as they were hastily drawn up, for the Amusement of a Day, I shall not put them into *your* Hands, but take the Liberty, which, I think, I have a Right to do, and for your Sake, the Trouble, to *digest them a new*, to make many *Alterations*, which, I hope, will not be for the worse, as well as *Additions* to what was then published. And, upon a Review of the Thoughts which lie before me, I plainly foresee, some of these will be so large, that the Original Writing will be the least Part by far, of what I now send you. I hope they will not swell it to a Bulk, that may discourage you from going through with it. And lest they should, I promise to contract my Thoughts, as much as may be, consistently with doing Justice to my Subject, and shall address myself to the Business of it without more Ceremony. For by this Time, Sir, I should hope, you are so well satisfied of the Cordiality of my Friendship and Esteem for you, that a great deal of Form and Ceremony between us will be no longer necessary.

What I have then to do is, in the first Place, to offer to your serious Consideration, some Things by way of *direct Defence* of the Church of *England* against your great and popular Objections; and, more particularly those, which you was pleased to hint to me. And because within the Compass I have proposed to take, (especially too having already promised you all possible and convenient Conciseness) there will hardly be room to say all that might be properly and usefully said upon each Subject, I shall avoid, as

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much as may be, (tho' it may not be *always* convenient, for good old Arguments are not the worse for wearing) *trite Things*, and such as you every where meet with; which, I hope, however, will not betray me (tho' I am well aware, that is but too natural) to take up with Things that are less solid. And, lest I should be thought to fail in this Attempt, that is, not be able to shew, *to your Satisfaction*, that all your Objections to the Church are weak and groundless, or not weighty enough to justify your withdrawing from its Communion, I will try, under each Head, to shew, as a *Succedaneum*, that the Objection, supposing there *be* any Strength in it, is equally strong against *your own Churches*: And if I should be so happy, as to make you sensible of this, which, I own, I have great Hopes of doing, (for you must, I should think, of yourself, have been sensible of it, if you had only *besthought* yourself of making the proper Reflections, which are all easy and natural, upon what you perfectly well know) you will then, I hope, give me Leave to claim the Performance of your Promise, of joining rather with the *established*, than the *dissenting* Churches, both being found alike faulty, if either of them are so.

In the Execution of the last mentioned Part, more especially, of my Design, I am very sensible it will behove me to walk with a good deal of Wariness and Circumspection, not only because my way is, in a manner untrodden, but also, because I am to walk almost without Light. To be plainer, Sir, your Churches are so secret in all their Ways, that there is scarce any know-
ing

ing what they are ; but to find them out, we must grope and feel for them, as in the Dark. The Church of *England* acts herein more openly : Every Part of her Government, Discipline, and Worship is exposed to the View, the Attacks and Insults of her Adversaries. They have the whole Book of *Common Prayer*, and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, with all the *Rubrics*, *Prefaces*, *Rules* and *Orders* concerning the Service thereof, (*not excepting the Table to find Easter for ever*) all the *Injunctions*, *Ordinances*, *Canons* and *Constitutions Ecclesiastical*, and even the *Common* and *Statute Law*, so far as concerns Ecclesiastical Matters, to canvass and cavil at : While your Churches, having no common Rules of Discipline or Worship, which you hold yourselves obliged to walk by, or, if you have any, not having made them public, and laid them before the World, for our Examination and Discussion, cannot be easily attack'd upon those Heads. And this, as I intimated before, makes the Task I have undertaken so difficult ; and indeed is no small Disadvantage that most Writers on the Side of the Church lie under. Upon this Footing, I often think a Controversy with you is something like fighting with a Ghost which has nothing one can level a Blow at, and make any Impression upon. Hence it is that in our Controversies, the first Attack has been commonly from *you*, and *we* have been forced to be *almost always* on the *defensive* Side ; and this, I dare say, has made many judge, it is agreed between us, that the Order and Worship of *your* Churches is every way *right* ; and the only Controversy is, Whether
those

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those of our Church are defensible, or not: Whereas, if the *Rules and Orders* (in case you have any) or, for want of these, if but the *Acts* of your Churches, and your general *Dealings* with your People, nay, if only the Prayers that are offered up in all your Congregations, tho' but on one Lord's Day in the Year, and the precise manner wherein the Sacraments are administered among you, were but as public, and in every Bodies Hands, as ours are, I am ready to think your Ministers would have Employment enough to defend their own, and not much Leisure to insult our Quarters.

These Things, Sir, concerning the Variety and Difformity of your Ways, and the Difficulty of coming at any certain Knowledge of many of them, for want of public, authentic *Rules and Ordinances* about them, and I had now, by reason of the general Shyness of your People of revealing and disclosing them to us (for that, I assure you, is a Thing much taken Notice of) these Things, I say, I thought it proper to premise, that you might not expect from me a fuller and more compleat Discovery of all your Ways and Practices, than you reasonably ought, and that if I should mistake any of them I might be the more easily forgiven, or my Correction be the more gentle. I will promise you to take (as well for the Sake of doing you Justice, as in regard to my Argument) as much Care as I can, not to mistake your Principles or Practices, or the State and Constitution of your Churches, and hope I shall not do it in any material Thing. And if my Discoveries thereof are few and defective, (which, as I never have been in your Se-

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cret they are too like to be) I must crave, Sir, your own Assistance, who, to be sure, can be no Stranger to any of the Ways of your own Churches, to supply what is wanting. And I flatter myself, that, between *my own* Observations and Reflections, and *your* more certain and intimate *Knowledge* of Things, we shall be able to *make up* such Evidence, as will be to you *satisfactory*, entirely convince you of the Faultiness of your own Churches, in those very Things for which ours has been condemned by you, and give, in the End, such an happy Determination to your Thoughts and Resolutions, as may be for your own Peace, at the same Time it promotes that of God's holy Church.

It is, Sir, you know, one of the favourite and fundamental Principles of the Dissension, that, by the Rule and Order of the Gospel, every Lay-christian has a Right to chuse his own Pastor: They pretend to maintain, that it is this Choice that constitutes the Relation between Pastor and People; which, therefore without it, would be none at all. And hence it comes to be esteemed a just Ground of Separation: So holds Dr. *Owen*, so Mr. *Baxter*, and so an hundred more. The Insufficiency of this Plea will be shewn by and by; and, in the mean while, I will only observe, that it is odious to be suggested, because it declares against Communion with all other Protestant established Churches, as well as ours, even the Church of *Scotland* itself, where the vacant Churches are filled, as here, by their proper Patrons.

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This divine and unalienable Right; as it is said to be, is pretended to be founded, (1.) Upon certain Precepts, Cautions or Advices in the holy Scriptures, which are thought to imply it: (2.) Upon some Instances wherein it is supposed to be used and exercised; and, (3.) Upon the plain Reason of the Thing: The first are such as these — *Take Heed how ye hear — Beware of false Prophets — Beware of the Concision — A Man that is an Heretick avoid — I beseech you, Brethren, mark them which cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learnt, and avoid them.* — So then, because Christians are admonished to remember, and make good Use of the Instructions they receive, that they may not fail of their due Effects; because they are bid to beware of the Wiles and Delusions, of Impostors, who will come to them with mighty Shews of Piety, and specious Appearances of great Humility and Innocence, because such as corrupt the Faith of the Gospel, or make Schisms in the Church, are to be avoided by the People; therefore they must have no Pastors but of their own chusing, and need not receive any, be they ever so orthodox and able, and behave themselves ever so peaceably and inoffensively *in the House of God*, whom the King or Bishop, or any Patron whatever, shall be legally entitled to send to them. This, sure, is no Argument; and Scripture-evidence must run very low, when such Evidence as this is taken up with. I have read, I suppose, those Passages more than an hundred Times, without once thinking of the Right of each Congregation to chuse its own Pastor. And
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now it is suggested I am not able, I own, to perceive any Sort of Connexion between *them* and *it*. Can you, Sir, think it a likely Thing, that our Lord and his Apostle had, in those Cautions, any View to our *Parochial* or *Congregational* Elections? For my Part, I could be well enough content, and almost wish they were to be taken in such a View: For what would the Cause of the Church lose? What would that of the Diffension gain by it? In that Case, the Choice would be limited to those who were found in the Faith, and in the Unity of the Church: And then, Sir, give me Leave to ask, what would become of the Dissenting Ministers? All Leaders, both in Heresy and Schism, are declared unfit, unqualified Persons, and utterly incapable of being chosen. The Faithful, far from permitted to enter into any *Pastoral Relation* to them, (much less preferably to others) are not permitted to have any *Christian Communion* with them, no, not so much as any *intimate unnecessary* Acquaintance and Familiarity with them in common Life. And I wish the Ministers, who are the unhappy Causes of such woeful Divisions and Offences, and you of the Laity both, (for it greatly concerns you) would lay this seriously to heart.

(2.) The Scripture Precedents and Examples in Support of the Right pretended to, are alledged with equal Futility and Impertinence. The Election or Call of *Matthias* to the Apostolate, in the room of *Judas*, and the Share the People had (if indeed they had any) therein, and that of the seven Deacons, come not up to the Point. In the former Case, the Election was evidently made by God, nor was *Matthias* elect-

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ed *their* Apostles, or had to *them* any Relation more than the other Apostles had, and much less such as the Pastors of particular Congregations now among us, have to *their* Flocks. And the same may be said of the seven Deacons. They were but presented, or recommended by the Brethren, as Men of honest Report, and not *that* to the pastoral Charge of so many Churches or Congregations, but to the Management of the common Stock. These Instances, then, are by no Means pertinent to, nor will affect the Merits of the Question now before us. And, indeed, in vain shall we look (as any one may well think) for Instances of Congregational Elections of their own peculiar Pastors, in Scripture Times, and those presently succeeding, when every Body knows, the Christian People were not distributed and cantoned into distinct Parishes and separate Congregations, each subjected to its own proper Pastor, but were attended by the Clergy, either in common, or by Turns, or in such other Order and Method, as the Bishops, their Superiors, in their Prudence, should appoint and direct.

But (3.) If Scripture Evidence fails us, and there be found there, no Proof of Right in the Christian People to chuse their own Pastors, is there not, I expect you will ask, a great deal of *Reason* in the Thing? Has not every Man a *Right*, and is he not *bound*, indeed, to take Care of his Soul? Sir, no body denies it. But we think, nevertheless, a Man provides very well for his Soul who submits himself to, who hears and regards with meek Heart, and pure Affection, the Instructions, and who devoutly attends all the

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Administrations of an able and orthodox Minister, by whomsoever he be provided. It will be confessed, I suppose, that the King and Bishops, the two Universities, the Lord High Chancellor, the Nobility and Gentry, who are our great Patrons, are more competent Judges of both the Abilities, and Orthodoxy of Clergymen, and of the Fitness of each for that particular Station, or Preferment he is designed for, than the common Run of Men, especially the Vulgar (if indeed these are to be distinguished) whose greatest Favourites, and most admired Ministers are, generally, Men of more Sound than Solidity; neither can I see any great Reason why we may not expect, that Clergymen of regular, and exemplary Lives should be preferred by *them*, as that *such* should be chosen by the *Populace*. I observe indeed, Mr. *Baxter*, arguing against us upon this Head, says plainly, *few of the Rich and Great are good*, but most of them vicious and profligate, and remarks thereupon, that *all Things are apt to generate their like*. Well! be it so; the Nobility and Gentry, we will, at present, suppose, if you please, are too apt to prefer such Clergymen, as are likest themselves, and somewhat tainted with *their* Vices. Are not the Multitude, the low Vulgar (for so, I doubt, the Majority of most Congregations, Non-conformists as well as Conformists, may not improperly be called) apt also to do the like? No, says Mr. *Baxter*, *It is known by Experience, that Learning and great Worth, does, as Light, so reveal itself to human Nature, that usually most of those who are loth to be holy themselves would have a Saint, and an able Man for their Minister*. To be sure, he is right;

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but how comes it, then, about, that this is true only of Congregational Electors, but not of Patrons? What is the Matter, that these naturally *generate their like*, (if I may be pardoned for being so free with his Expression) and always affect to promote worthless Clergymen, while the other are altogether for Saints, and Scholars; I must desire, Sir, the Nobility, and you of the Gentry, may have the Benefit of this Observation, as well as the common People. I hope you are as well, if not somewhat better entitled to it. Learning and great Worth, I should think, would as soon, like Light, reveal itself to an *English* Nobleman, or Gentleman, as to a common Tradesman or Mechanick: For it is not the Nature of this Light to shew itself most to those who are in the Dark. Those who have generally a polite and liberal Education, and may be presumed to have Sense and Understanding corresponding with it, are as like, to my thinking, to *discern real Worth*, to be charmed with it, and reward it, as the more illiterate and uneducated. And, methinks too, they would be *as much*, not to say *more* ashamed of making an unworthy and scandalous Choice; for such a Choice will either discover they want Sense to distinguish a *worthy* from an *unworthy* Clergyman, or else, that they are so abandoned as to prefer, knowingly, an unworthy one, which is a wilful and shameful betraying their sacred Trust, not very consistent with *nice Honour*. And the Shame of it too, will be *all their own*, whereas, the Shame of such a Choice, when it comes to be divided amongst a Multitude, is just nothing.

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But suppose such a Choice happens to be made, and a Clergyman, against whom there lies any just Exception, comes to be promoted to a Parochial Cure of Souls, the Parishioners, there, are in no worse Condition than their dissenting Neighbours, when such an one is chosen by the major Part of a Congregation, creeping into it by Intrigue, as ^a Dr. Calamy himself confesses it sometimes happens. Nay, indeed, they are in somewhat better, especially below in the Country, because they can resort to some neighbouring Church better provided for, with little Inconvenience, and often as conveniently as to their own, which a Dissenter cannot do, the Meetings there being thin spread, those especially of the same Sect and Denomination. Is he suspected of Heresy? His Heresy, so long as he keeps it to himself, will do *them* no Mischief. Does he affect to spread it? That is giving them Notice to beware of him; and by the Help of Books and of other orthodox and pious Clergymen, to whom all who appear solicitously concerned for their Salvation will be welcome, may be secured from any Harm he can do them. If he be profligate and immoral, in a notorious degree, (a Case, however, I hope, rarely happen-

^a The Passage of Dr. Calamy referred to is in his Sermon, preached at the Ordination of Mr. John Munkley, p. 13. in these Words—*It cannot, indeed, be denied, but that where Persons have the free Choice of their own Pastors, Fancy may often very much influence them in the fixing on one rather than another; Interest also may sometimes have a great Sway, and there may be room for various Intrigues of designing Men, as we now and then see and observe, to our Sorrow.*

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ing) any Parishioner, or other, will highly deserve Commendation, and hardly fail of it from all that are serious, if he endeavour to have him legally removed. And if he fail in his Attempt, (which, in a plain Case, is not likely) he would be less to be blamed, if he should, afterwards, resort, altho' constantly, to some other Church. If there be only some Faults and Blemishes in his Life, and it be not altogether so irreproachable as it ought to be, yet if he regularly performs the Offices of Religion, and duly administers the holy Sacraments, the Efficacy whereof does not depend upon the Worthiness of the Minister, and laudably discharges the other Duties of his Function, and his Doctrine be true and good, he may be useful to them, and help them forward in the Way that leads to everlasting Life. Don't be surprized, Sir, as if you thought I was advancing *strange* Principles, in favour of vicious Clergymen. Not quite so *strange*, Sir, as you may imagine; for I can name you wise and good Men, and, among these, ^a some of the best of the old Puritans themselves, who have said and maintained the same thing; *that God gives ministerial Abilities to many who have not saving Grace—that we may lawfully attend upon the Ministry of those whose*

^a This is held by Mr. Samuel Hieron, *Preacher's Plea*: By Mr. Anthony Burges, *Treatise of Faith and Assurance*, p. 503. By Mr. Reiner, in his *Resolution of the Question*, Whether Grace be essentially necessary to a Minister of the Gospel: By Mr. Ball, *Trial of the Grounds*, &c. p. 310. Mr. Perkins also in his *Expos. of Christ's Sermon*; and Mr. Pemble on the *Nature and Properties of Grace*, p. 125 hold the same thing.

Lives and Conversations are offensive, if their Doctrines be sound and good — that their Lives are no just Plea for neglecting their Ministry, or avoiding their Communion—that God sometimes makes Use of an unregenerate Preacher to convert Souls, and that some godly Souls have confessed, that such have been the Means of their Conversion. And in regard to others who are *conscionable in their Place*, and of unblameable Life, yet of inferior Abilities, and but meanly qualified for the Ministry, they hold, that *there are none, be they ever so wise, but may profit by them, and that their Ministry, therefore, is not to be forsaken with Contempt.* In all these Cases, the Souls of the People may be very safe, under their proper Minister, if they will but make Use of all the Assurances he can give them, with such other Helps, as, in great Plenty, lie before them, good Books, religious Discourse and Conference, with Application, in Cases of Doubt and Difficulty, to such other Ministers, as may be esteemed abler, and more pious, who will, doubtless, afford them free Access, and give them their best Assistance, in all Matters concerning their Salvation.

I expect, Sir, you will tell me (for 'tis a popular and captivating Argument, and is got, I know not how, into every Body's Mouth) that one has, surely, as good Right to chuse his own *Pastor*, to whom he commits the Care and Guidance of his *Soul*, as to chuse his *Lawyer* or *Physician* with whom he intrusts his *Body* or *Estate*. And yet, Sir, as you know very well, *Physicians*, in many Places, are provided, neither by each *Patient* for himself, nor by the collective

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lective Body of the Society, nor the Majority of them, but either by the immediate Governors thereof, or by the Publick, while no Body dreams of any Ineroachment upon their natural Rights, or any Kind of Hardship being put upon them. The Pensioners (for Example) of the Royal Hospitals of *Greenwich* and *Chelsea* do not, I presume, complain, nor does, I believe, any Dissenter in *England* think they have Reason to complain, of any Infringement of their natural Rights, by having *Physicians* provided for them by the Government. Nor do the Patients in *St. Thomas's*, or *St. Bartholomew's* think themselves ill treated, because their *Physicians* and Surgeons are not of their *own chusing*; especially having Liberty to call in the Assistance of any other in Cases of Difficulty and Danger, as any Parishioner, in extraordinary Cases, as under Doubts and Perplexities of Conscience, for Example, may seek for pastoral Instruction and Advice, wherever he pleases. Nor did our Fleets or Armies, as far as I have heard, ever mutiny on that Account. And as to Lawyers, tho' you may ordinarily employ whom you please to plead your Cause at the Bar, and to transact for you some other Matters, yet, in many Cases one may easily name, they are *provided* for you and *imposed* upon you. And particularly, you must abide, tho' your whole Property, or even Life were at Stake, by such Judges as the King's Majesty shall appoint to distribute Justice in his Dominions. And this suggests a very plain Difference between the two Cases of chusing your Pastors, and chusing your Lawyers and Physicians. Your Pastors are your Guides and Govern-
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vernors, to whom you owe Subjection in spiritual Things; and it is not, I think, quite so reasonable to challenge to yourselves the chusing of *these* as of *the other*, who have no Authority over you, who are only to do for you one particular Service, and be paid for it, and when that is done, have no farther Concern with you. Twenty Things more have been already said by others, to shew the Difference, and to expose the Flaws of this Reasoning. But my present Business is not so much, *confuting*, as *representing* this Principle, shewing how it is held by You, and how notoriously, all the while, *slighted* and *counteracted* in your own Practices.

It is well known, that the Presbyterians have not been always in the Sentiments they now profess about this matter. There was a time when they had no Notion of any Right every one had to chuse his own Pastor, but argued against it just in the manner *we* now do. In their *Jus Divinum Ministerii Evangelici*, this Position is laid down, *that the Election of a Minister does not belong, by divine Right, wholly and solely, to the major Part of every particular Congregation.* And they endeavour to support it, by examining the Texts of Scripture that were used to be *then*, and are *now* brought for the contrary Opinion, and shewing how they were misunderstood, or misapplied; and by an additional Consideration of the Mischiefs and Inconveniences of such Congregational Elections: nor did your Independents, when they came into Power; abolish Patronages, and restore the

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People to their pretended Right to chuse their own Pastors, or indeed shew any great Regard to their Desires and Inclinations herein. Some, in the Days of Independency, instead of being *chosen* by the *Parishioners*, were *inducted* into their Livings by a *Troop of Horse*. After the Restoration, indeed, *the Case was altered*. The Church was, then, re-established, and the conformable Clergy put into Possession of the Livings. And then presently might be heard a loud and general Cry of all the Sects, your Presbyterians, Sir, as well as others, for the *Divine Right* of the People to desert their Parish Ministers, and to have Pastors of their own chusing. And this Cry has been hitherto continued, nor will, I dare say, ever cease, unless they should have an Opportunity to seize again the publick Churches and Revenues. And then, the former Doctrine and Position, in all likelihood, would be again taken up, that *the Election of Ministers does not belong, by Divine Right, to the major Part of particular Congregations*. Such great and sudden Variations, you must needs, Sir, confess, have an Appearance of setting your Principles to the Times, and State of Things, and give great Cause to suspect, that you your selves have no mighty Notion, and are not half persuaded of the Sacredness of the Right to chuse your own Pastors, but that you maintain it, and bear it so high, because it is *convenient*, suited to your Circumstances and Situations. But this will appear more plainly, if we consider the manifest Infractions and Violations of
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it you are daily guilty of, and I am now going to lay before you.

When any one of your Churches becomes vacant by the *Death* or *Conformity* of the Minister, or his being *called to a better People*, you, Sir, need not be told, the way is, to fill it, as soon as may be, to prevent the Dispersion of the Flock, that is to say, in other Words, *to prevent their chusing*, for their Pastor, the Minister of the Parish, or some other that is conformable, whom, during the Vacancy, they may have a Fancy to hear, and happen to take a liking to. But then who are the Electors? In the lesser Country Congregations, where there happens be one eminently superior to all the rest, it will be easily believed, *he* has the Choice of the Pastor left to him. Had not *you*, Sir, that Compliment paid you? I fancy you had. In other Congregations, two or three, or half a dozen, we will say, leading Men and principal Subscribers lay their Heads together, and pitch upon one for their future Pastor, the rest, of course, acquiescing in him. And so these, in effect, and to all Purposes, are the Patrons of the Benefice, or Preferment. In larger and richer Congregations there is often a Competition. And who, in *these* Cases, are the *Electors*? In some Churches the *Communicants*, while the mere *Auditors*, who, it may be, are Nine in Ten, are excluded: And when their Suffrages have been admitted, it has been said, none but *the Men*, nor *all these* indeed, have any Concern in the Election. Their *Wives*, their *Sons*, and their *Daughters*, their

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Man-Servants, and their *Maid-Servants*, have had no Share in it. This, in my Opinion, is a little hard upon that Part of the Congregation. But does the Word of God lay this Hardship upon them? Is the Election of Pastors, by the Scripture-Rule limited to Communicants? Or, if not to *them*, is it to the *Males*, the *Houſholders*, or *Subscribers*? Where do we read any thing like *that*? — And as this Method of Election is not preſcribed or countenanced in God's Book, ſo neither is it agreeable to your *own* Principles, as they are taught and maintained in your *own* Books. For as they ſtand *there*, every one is to have the Choice of his Paſtor, who has a Soul to be committed to his Charge. And have not *theſe* Souls, as well as their *Huſbands*, their *Fathers*, or their *Masters*? And as *theſe* are by far the greater Number, were they allow'd to have any Part in the Election, and to act *freely* in it, the Majority of Voices, 'tis poſſible, might go another way. — Well! the Election is now over; and how few can properly be ſaid to have a Paſtor of *their own chuſing*? The far greater Part of the Congregation, nine in ten, or nineteen in twenty, as the Caſe may happen, had no Share in it; and of thoſe who had, very nigh half, it may be, have a Paſtor *forced* upon them by the reſt, one too, whom they did not only *not chuſe*, but have been *ſtruggling againſt*, and doing all they could to *ſet aſide*. And if theſe ſhould be ſo untractable and ſelf-willed, as to think of ſplitting the Congregation, in Favour of the Gentleman they would have had,

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(which has been sometimes done, and, as one would think, upon your Principles, not a Word could be said against it) they shall be sure to hear in both Ears of the *Carnality of Religious Contention*, and of the *heinous Sin of causing Schisms in the Church*, and that they ought to be concluded by the Majority; which upon your Principles, pardon me, good Sir, is just such Nonsense, as if it were said, that if the major Part were to chuse a Lawyer or Physician for the Congregation, the Minority ought to acquiesce in their Choice, and hold themselves bound to make use of *him*, and of no other.

But let all this pass; and let us suppose he was *duly*, that is to say, *unanimously* chosen, and that not only by those that are commonly esteemed the rightful Electors, but by the whole Congregation that are of Age and Ability to judge, in some reasonable manner, whom they had best commit the Care of their Souls to. And we will suppose he lives among them (for that is a common Case) Twenty, Thirty, or Forty Years. But then, alas! *One Generation cometh and another goeth away*; and by this time, all his Electors, or very nigh all, may be in their Graves. What is it now that constitutes the Relation between *him* and his *present* People; and makes him a Pastor to them, more truly than the Parish Minister is to others that are conformable, and would be to *them*, if they would only please to go to Church, and duly attend on his Ministrations. He is, plainly, no Pastor of *theirs*; for he is no Pastor of *their chusing*.
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He might be a Pastor to their Ancestors, or to their Predecessors in their Farms, or Shops. But what is that to *them*? These have no more Right to impose a Pastor upon all that come after them, than any Patron has to impose one upon the present Inhabitants of the Parish. In fine, there is no way I can see, consistently with your Principles, to make him related to *them* as *their* Pastor, but his making once in a while a *formal Cession* of his Meeting, and being then, if it shall so happen, *re-elected* into it.

In the next Place, Sir, I can't understand, how the Constitution of a Church by an *explicite* Covenant (the Constitution of many of your Churches) is reconciled with the Right of the People to chuse their Pastors, as they do their Lawyers or Physicians. Perhaps, you will say, this is very strange; for is not their Covenanting with their Pastors to walk with *them* in all Christian Ordinances, according to God's Appointment, the very Use and Exercise of such a Right? I agree to it. But then, Sir, I desire to know, is not this Covenant understood to be, ordinarily, for Life? And do you chuse your Lawyers or Physicians *so*? Do you chuse *these* once for all, and bind your selves to them by a Covenant, in such manner, that you can't leave them at pleasure, and when you think you have Cause for it? When you have chosen your Pastor, you may repent of it, and sometimes, perhaps, have Reason good to do so. But your Choice is made; and you are not at liberty to join your selves to another, unless

unless he, to whom you were joined before, shall release you. And this plainly appears from a little Book, entitled, *Heads of Agreement assented to by the United Ministers in and about London, formerly called Presbyterian and Congregational*. Where, Sir, be pleased to observe, they were formerly called Presbyterian and Congregational, but were not thenceforward to be called so. For these ^a *two Sticks being made one*, they were neither Presbyterian, nor Congregational, but something between both. But this only by the Way. Let us come to the Point we were upon. Say the united Ministers, *A Visible Professor joined to a particular Church ought to continue stedfastly with the said Church, and not forsake the Ministry and Ordinances there dispensed, without an orderly seeking a Recommendation unto another Church*. And if he attempt to join himself, without such Recommendation, to another, he ought not to be received. *We ought not (say they) to admit any one to be a Member of our respective Congregations, that has joined himself to another, without Endeavours of mutual Satisfaction of the Congregations concerned*. It is not meant, as you, Sir, perhaps, in the Rectitude and Simplicity of your Heart, may imagine, that a Professor joined, or in Communion with his Parish Church ought to continue stedfastly with the said Church, and not forsake the Ministry and Ordinances there dis-

^a A Sermon so entitled, preach'd by Mr. Mead before the united Ministers on occasion of their Union.

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penſed, and that, if he offer to join himſelf to a Diſſenting Congregation, he ought not to be there admitted, unleſs the Miniſter of the Pariſh be content and ſatiſfied therewith. No, Sir; *Meo periculo*, I'll be answerable for them, that was none of their Meaning. His Pariſh Church he may leave, as he pleaſes, out of *Will*, or *Humour*, *Levity*, *Interest*, *Diſtaſte*, or any Motive whatever, and be readily received among *them* without asking any Questions, without bringing, or ſeeking a Recommendation from his Pariſh Miniſter. But when he has left his Pariſh Church; and is once joined to any Diſſenting Congregation, then, Sir, but not before, it is a *Sinful withdrawing*, if he depart from that Congregation without leave, or asking leave, upon ſuch Motives. And whatever his Motives are, he cannot be received into any other Church, without a fair Recommendation from his former. They do indeed ſay, *Such Recommendation ought to be given, when the Caſe of the Perſon apparently requires it*. But who is to be Judge (he and his Church, you may be ſure, and nobody elſe) of that *Apparency*? And he, for his Part, one may eaſily ſuppoſe, is too much intereſted in the Greatneſs of his Congregation, to be over free of ſuch Favours. If one removes his Habitation to any great Diſtance, that is a Caſe that does *apparently* require it, and his Paſtor as one would imagine, can't, for ſhame, reſuſe to diſmiſs him, and ſend him away in Peace. And yet, per-chance, even in *this* Caſe, it may be held
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right, not to dismiss him *in haste*, or, perhaps, *at all*, if there be thought any just and reasonable Exception to the Pastor, or Congregation, he is now betaking himself to. And in this Refusal he is plainly countenanced, if not fully justified by Ch. 28. of *The Institution of Churches and the Order appointed in them by Jesus Christ*, where, after declaring the just Causes of any ones Departure, 'tis said, *he consulting with the Church, or the Officer or Officers thereof, may peaceably depart from the Communion of the Church, wherewith he has walked; to join himself with some other Church WHERE HE MAY ENJOY THE ORDINANCES IN THE PURITY OF THE SAME.* A plain Intimation, that in case it be apprehended he cannot enjoy there all the Ordinances in their Purity, his Dismission may be justly refused. But as to the Plea of Distance of Habitation, if he still reside in any Part of *London, or Westminster, with their Suburbs, and the Borough;* I doubt it will hardly, in any Case, be admitted. For in all likelihood, it will be said, he may still continue in the Communion of the Church whereunto he was joined, as hundreds are known to do from the most distant Parts of those Places. — See, Sir, now, what Difficulties a Man may be brought into by this *unscriptural Method*, this *crafty Invention* of a Church Covenant, how it deprives him of his Right, if not to chuse *once*, yet to *dismiss* his Pastor, when he sees Cause, and that under the *Shew of Liberty*, it holds him in *real Bondage*.

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Sometimes,

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Sometimes, Sir, it happens that Gentlemen of your Persuasion are possessed of the Advowsons of Benefices appendant to their Manors, or Estates. How do they act, in the Disposal of them, on any Vacancy? If they would act conscientiously, according to their Principles, they can do no other than leave the Matter to the Parish, presenting such Clerk as the Parishioners shall chuse, or nominate. But I have not heard of any Instances of this Proceeding. I suppose they do, upon such Occasions, like some other Patrons regarding private and personal Considerations, more than the *real good*, or (which, at least, we ought to expect from *them*) the *Fancies* and *Inclinations* of the People. I know not, Sir, whether you are a Patron, having never been, as you may guess, mightily inquisitive after those Matters. But a Relation of yours as you very well know, has the alternate Right of Presentation to the Rectory of P——, and when he disposed of it the last time it fell into his Hands, he never *consulted*, or *minded* the Parishioners but presented a Gentleman *after his own liking*; and you are not ignorant of the general Discontent of the Parishioners, thereat, and how much, then, they regretted the loss of their late Minister. And from the few Instances I have heard of, I am apt to think, it would, upon a particular Enquiry, be found, that such Clergymen as have been presented by Dissenters, are generally less, but, to be sure, not more acceptable to their Parishioners, than others.

But their most scandalous Contravention to their own Principles is in the Choice of City Lecturers, where they are sometimes seen as busy as other People, collecting and mustering their Forces in behalf of a Gentleman whom *they know not, nor ever intend to hear, and care not a chip for,* and striving by the weight of *their* Suffrages, to turn the Election in *his* Favour, and so *force* him upon the Parish, *against the liking,* as it may happen, of the *far greater Part* of his Auditors. This is not very modest, no more than it would be in the Members of our Church to be seen thronging to a Meeting, to Vote in the Election of your Ministers. But setting aside the Immodesty of the thing; it is such an open, direct, immediate, bare-faced Contradiction to their avowed Principles, as Dissenters, that one would think it can't but be perceived by the meanest, or most unattentive of them, and must be accompanied with the Condemnation of their own Hearts. Their Ministers teach them, and they, doubtless, believe, that the Salvation of Men so much depends upon their liking of their Pastor, that he ought to be of their own chusing. Yet *will* they, if it be possible, *impose* Pastors upon *our* People, *against their Liking* and Inclination, as if they meant to hinder their Salvation. I wish their Ministers would be pleased to teach them better, and admonish them not to interest themselves on these Occasions, but to walk more *charitably* towards *us*, as well as act more *consistently* with *themselves*. Permit me to tell those Gentlemen it would become them, and

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be much for their Credit to do so. We should then say, *This is fair! This is honest! This is consistent!* But if, instead of this, they let them go on, if not encourage them to stickle in these Affairs, they may be thought, perhaps, more attentive to their *little Designs*, and *Party-Views*, than to their *Principles*. In fine, if this Practice continues, I am humbly of Opinion, it ought to be, by Law and Authority, prevented, by taking away a Right (if any they have) prejudicial to the Church of *England*, and no way *Valuable*, but rather *Injurious* to themselves, inasmuch as they cannot make *conscientiously*, any use of it.

Near a-kin with the foregoing there is another Reason many of you have for their Separation (but whether this, Sir, be one of yours, I am not certain) to wit, *purser Ordinances*, and *better Edification*. The publick Worship of the establish'd Church and the Instructions there given, are not, it seems, so *pure* and so *edifying*, as those they find at Meeting. And they hold themselves not only *at Liberty*, but indeed *bound*, to chuse the *purest Ordinances*, and to sit down under that *Preaching*, by which they think they can *most profit*. Of those who leave the Communion of the Church for the Meeting on any *Religious Account* or Pretence, (for you must, Sir, be sensible, some do it for *Interest*, or out of *Pique* and *Distaste*, and other Motives equally corrupt) I am well satisfied there is hardly one in twenty, but do it, and will own they do it, *chiefly*, if not *solely*, upon this Account. They have no Scruples about the Lawfulness of our Communion, at least at *at the*
Time

Time of their leaving us, whatever they may come to have *afterwards*, through the Industry of their new Pastors, and the constant Conversation of their new Friends, who will, doubtless, omit no Opportunity to sow, and carefully cultivate, in their Minds, the same Scruples and Prejudices they themselves are possessed with. And of those who have *always* been in the dissenting Way, I am convinced there are not a few (divers there are, to my Knowledge) who will freely own *they have nothing to say against the Church*, but that 'tis only for *better Teaching*, that they do as they do, and continue in the Way they were put into. And they apprehend it is their Duty to do so. This is what they say, and your Ministers seem to approve and *praise their Saying*. They seem to be unanimous in *this*, that 'tis *Right* to separate for *greater Purity of Worship*; and I don't perceive they deny, but are willing enough to have it thought, that 'tis also *right* to separate for *more edifying Preaching*. *Edifying*, says ^aone of them, *is generally used for Instructing and Teaching; and a Man is edified, when he improves in Spiritual Knowledge, in Faith, in Love to God and Men. And this being* (continues he, and, doubtless, agreeably to the Sentiments of the rest) *the greatest thing a Christian has to look after, he is bound to use those means he finds most conducive thereunto*. This is true or false, according as it is taken. If it be taken to mean, that a Christian is bound, in Love and Justice

^a Remarks on Dr. Wells's Letter, &c. p. 34.

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to his own Soul, to follow, and constantly adhere to such Teacher, as he apprehends to preach *most Edifyingly*, so far as he *may*, consistently with the Peace and common Edification of the Church of God, and the Duty he owes to it, this I think may be admitted as true and incontestable: But if it be taken to mean, as it must mean to be pertinent to *his Purpose*, that he is *bound* to adhere to such Teacher for his own private Edification, and and to follow him beyond the Pale of the Church, and at the Expence of its Edification, Unity, and Peace, nothing can be falser; and I may add, too, more *absurd*, because it supposes, that, by means of committing a Sin, and staining his Soul with Guilt, he is edified and improved in Faith and Holiness. And the Plea it contains for Separation is such, as none would make who have any Notion of a Church, and of *one* Church, or the least Sense of any Obligation Christians are under to preserve the Unity thereof.

We find, Sir, every now and then, your Ministers valuing themselves for being the *Children and Followers* of the old *Puritans*. I wish to God that they were. We should not then see them, as now we do, justifying and encouraging Separation, upon the sole Account of *less defective Ways of Worship*, and *more edifying Preaching*. For so did *not* the old *Puritans*. If they were really *their* Children, and Inheritors of *their* Principles, we should have them daily, if not in our Pulpits, yet in our Churches, and their People following their Examples. And if there were any obstinate-
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ly continuing in their Separation, we might expect to see *The Unreasonableness of Separation, Separation self-condemned, A friendly Trial of the Grounds of Separation, A grave and modest Confutation of the Separatists, and the Arraignment of Schism*, flowing from their Pens, as well as from those of their pretended Ancestors. To be plain, Sir, they mistake their Family: It is not so good as they imagine. If they had any *Forefathers* among us, they must be the old *Brownists*, not the *Puritans*, their great Adversaries and Opponents. The *Brownists* were real *Separatists*, but these not. Therefore they are their Fathers; and I am sorry to say it, they even seem to have degenerated from them, in Point of Looseness of Principle about Church-Communion. The *Brownists* separated themselves from the Church, because, it seems, in their Opinions, it had not the *Essence*, and, as the Word is, *the constitutive Form* of a Church. Give them a Church rightly, in their Minds, formed and constituted, and there is Reason to think they would not have separated from it, merely on such Accounts as we are now speaking of. Will you please, Sir, to hear what they say in their Apology N. 36. *None are to separate for Faults and Corruptions, which may and will fall out among Men, even in true constituted Churches, but by due Order to seek the Redress thereof. And if not for Faults and Corruptions, then not, surely, for mere Defects not essential, or for a greater Purity of Administrations, and less still, I think, for the Want of the most excellent and edifying Preaching.*

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It is not, Sir, very easy to understand what it is that your Friends mean by *less defective Ways of Worship*, and *purser Administrations* than those in the Church of *England*. As to Defects in our Worship, Have we dropp'd or mutilated any Ordinance of God? Have we not publick Prayers and Supplications to him for all needful Things? Do we not celebrate his Praises? Do we not read publickly the Holy Scriptures? Is not his pure Word preach'd? And the Sacraments, are not they duly administred among us? If any Gospel-Ordinance be wanting, let *them*, or will you, Sir, be pleased to name it. — And as to *Purity of Ordinances*, I know not what it should be, or consist in, besides a *Conformity to the Institution*. And pray tell me, which of the Ordinances of the Gospel are here administred, in any such manner unconformable to, and disagreeing with the Institution, as can, in the least, hinder and obstruct the Virtue and Efficacy thereof. I do indeed suspect you estimate the *Purity* of Ordinances and Churches, by the *Paucity* of Rites and Ceremonies received into them, and hold those purest that have none at all. By which Rule, your Churches (if you have no Ceremonies, which, perhaps, at some other Time I shall inquire into) must be esteemed purer than the Apostolical, which had certainly *some*, such as the *Kiss of Peace*, *uncovering the Heads of the Men* in divine Offices, in token of the *natural Superiority of that Sex*, and *veiling those of the Women*, in token of their *Subjection and Subordination to it*.

Supposing,

Supposing, however, some *Defects not essential*, something *wanting* in our Church, that would be expedient and useful, or something *in* it, not so well ordered as could be wished, I am very sure that neither our blessed Saviour, nor his Evangelists, or Apostles, *Peter, Paul, James, or John*, ever taught you, it was your Duty to renounce Communion with the Church on those Accounts. St. *Paul*, particularly, when he had Occasion, in his Epistles, to take Notice of some considerable Irregularities and Abuses which had crept into the Discipline and Worship of the Churches he writes to, gives no Injunction or Command, nor so much as drops the least Intimation of its being the Duty of all who would be accounted faithful, to set up separate and *less defective Ways of Worship*, and to form themselves into distinct and opposite Communions upon that footing. Hence I think it is pretty plain, he had no Thought of the *great Duty of Separation* upon Account of *greater Purity*, or *less defective Ways of Worship*. Nor let it be said, we our selves own the Truth and Justness of this Principle, by our own separating, *for greater Purity of Worship*, from the Church of Rome. Not, Sir, for *greater Purity*, properly speaking, but for *Purity absolutely considered*. The Worship of that Church is grossly idolatrous, and, therefore, *quite impure*, and *downright sinful*; and when *ours* comes to be *so*, I will freely allow you to go out from it, and do hereby engage to go out of it too, myself, in Company with you.

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As to more edifying Preaching, we are not ignorant what is *theirs*, and what *ours* is. But no more, Sir, of this confident Boasting. I will allow *theirs* to be as edifying as they please, since St. Paul does not allow *that* to be a good Plea for your Separation. Let any one think otherwise, if he can, when he reads and considers these Words of his to the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. iii. 4. *While one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but Ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every Man. I have planted, Apollos watered: but God gave the Increase. So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the Increase.* Here is a sharp and severe Censure of their magnifying, and being puffed up for one Teacher against another, and *that*, tho' he himself was one of the Parties so magnified, and tho', too, there was no actual Separation of the other, with his Adherents, in point of Church Communion. And here we have, too, strong Reasoning and convincing Argument against it. "Who am I, says he in effect, or who that *Apollos* whom some of you so extol, as if he had led you further, and given you a deeper Insight into the Mysteries of the Gospel, and *edified you more*, than I have done. We are but Servants and Instruments, by whom the Doctrine of the Gospel has been convey'd to you, whose Gifts, being from God alone, do not afford you the least ground to attribute any thing to your Teachers. I planted the Gospel among you; *Apollos* came after, and watered

watered it. What then? Nothing from hence can be ascribed to either of us. Neither he, nor I have any Power to make it take Root, and grow in your Hearts. Our Gifts, whether great or small, in this respect are as nothing, but the Growth and Encrease is owing to God alone, and to his Blessing upon his Ordinance." Is this talking now like one who held it the Duty of every Christian to follow, tho' it were into actual and open Schism, such Teacher as he judges the most excellent and edifying? No, Sir, he was far from inculcating any such Church-dividing, and Church-destroying Principle; for such it plainly is; and as it has been exceedingly hurtful to *our Church*, so, e'er this, it would have *utterly confounded your Churches*, if your People had constantly pursued, and acted, in all things in Consistency with it, and your Ministers had not taken (of which more by and by) *wise Measures* and *prudent Precautions* to prevent its operating among *you*, in so destructive a manner.

To make it appear, that your People *are not true to this Principle*, and act, in many Things, inconsistently with it, let it be remembered what it is, *That every Christian is bound to adhere to that way of Worship which is least defective, and to that Teacher whom he judges most edifying*, is the Principle. Do they, now, follow this Principle in all Things? Few of them do, any further than while they have separated themselves from the Church of *England*, by the help of it. When that is done, they lay it aside as useless, or as Dangerous in the Use.

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In saying, as you do, you only chuse, as it is your Duty, *the least defective Way of Worship*, you plainly confess there are some Defects in *your own Way*, as well as *ours*, though not so great, or many. Now for the same Reason that you are bound to chuse a *less defective Way of Worship*, you are, certainly, bound to chuse one that has no Defects at all. True, you will say, but such an one is hardly to be found. I believe so too: That is, certainly, the very Truth of the Case. But if such a Church is, at present, no where to be found, might it not be formed? Why should not you, Sir, and such others as are sensible of Defects in your own Churches, divide your selves from the rest who are fond of continuing them, and gathering together from all Parts, if there are not enough for the Purpose issuing out of each Congregation, form your selves into a Church which shall be free from those Defects at least, if not from all other? And if all cannot agree in any one Form or Method of Divine Worship that shall be thought *without Defect*, you may subdivide again and again, and *all who are like minded in every Thing* make up a little Flock, to worship God in their own Way. I know, it will be said, “ This is quite Ridiculous and Absurd! “ This would be very Inconvenient, and tends “ to endless Confusion! This would be doing “ like a certain *New England* Minister, of “ of whom the Story goes, that he could not “ bear the Defects of their Worship *there*, and “ therefore *forsook* it, turned a kind of *Seeker*, “ and at last could not find (good Man!) a- “ ny Church upon Earth purified enough for
“ him

“him to communicate withal.” Well, that Gentleman may be ridiculed; but, for all that, he was, I’ll maintain it, *a perfectly consistent Protestant Dissenter*: He did but act *the true practical Part* of his own Principle; and his Brethren in *old England* must do the same, or else renounce the Principle upon which the Church of *England* is forsaken.

Thus, (for Example) in some of your Churches, the Minister *uses the Lord’s Prayer*; in others, *not*: Most of you, ’tis like, approve of Singing *David’s Psalms*, but some may be possessed with Scruples, and think ^athe *Sectarian Objections* which Mr. Baxter speaks of against Singing them, of great Weight, at least ’till they are *Christianized*, in some such way as is done by Dr. *Watts*, and made more suitable to the Gospel-State: In some again, I suppose, they are sung, the first Line only being rehearsed aloud, the Congregation going on, of themselves, with the rest; in others, it is repeated Line by Line. Now, considering that it is not the Harmony of your Sentiments and Principles about these Matters, but mere Proximity of Habitation, especially in the Country, that brings you together to the same Meeting, it would be very *marvellous*, if it should fall out, that *all, in every Place*, whose Lot it is to have their Habitations in the same Parish or Neighbourhood, and who, therefore, assemble together, should have the same Sentiments concerning these Things. As you are

^a Cases of Conscience, *Quest.* 124.

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well known to think differently about them, one Part, a greater or a less, in every Congregation, may be fairly supposed to think, that the repeating the Psalm *Line by Line* is a *Defect*, as it interrupts and spoils the Harmony; another Part, particularly those that have not Psalm Books, or cannot Read, must surely think, the not repeating it so is more than a *Defect*, a *real Corruption*, as it keeps them from *knowing* what is sung, and *joining* in it, and is, therefore, contrary to Edification. And as to the Lord's Prayer, one Part of the Congregation is likely to think, the Ministers not using it, is a Slight and Disrespect to it, and the other, that it too much *countenances* Forms of Prayer, and tends to the *quenching of the Spirit*. And yet we find, these Defects and Corruptions notwithstanding, you keep together, and have no Thought of separating, and setting up a *less defective Way of Worship*; which, to be true to your Principles, any Child can see you ought to do.

There is as little Reason to believe that your Friends do, generally, follow what they think *the most Excellent and Edifying Preaching*, as that they, generally, adhere to what they esteem *the least defective Way of Worship*. In the City, I guess, they are mostly determined to embrace the Ministry of *this or that Gentleman*, by their *Personal Knowledge* of, *Friendship* with, or *Relation* to him, some particular *Views and Interests*, *Nearness of Habitation* to his Meeting, and other Considerations of the like Nature. And though, now and then, they may be disposed to follow the Preaching of
some

some other Minister of more Excellent Gifts, and admired Qualifications, yet they content themselves to sit down, ordinarily, under the Ministry of *their own*. And, indeed, if it were otherwise, I am ready to think, there would be some half a Dozen, or such a number of Meetings, where the People would be throng'd to Death, while the rest would remain almost empty. Look into the Country, and there it will be plain, there are few or none but go to the nearest and most convenient Meeting. But now, is it likely that all the Members of each Congregation, or the Bulk and Generality of them, do in their Consciences think their own Pastor more Edifying than any they know elsewhere. It would be a mighty Chance, and indeed a Miracle, if it were so. No doubt of it, there will be in the Neighbourhood, in one Place or other, whither they may resort every Lord's Day, some other Minister, whom great numbers of them can't but confess to be more Edifying than he who is now their Pastor. And if there be, they will be obliged, I think, by their Principle, *of the Duty of following the most Edifying Preacher*, to resort, ordinarily, to him. Or if, in their Neighbourhood, there be none esteemed better than their own, yet in their Journeys any whither, or when they have had Occasion to repair to *the famous City of London*, they have chanced to find, among *the learned Divines there*, such an one, in comparison with whom their own Country Minister shall be, perhaps, esteemed nobody, I don't, see how they can be excused from removing their Habitations into the City, or near it, that they
may

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may have the Benefit of his Ministry. This I own, may be somewhat inconvenient and prejudicial to them, in their Worldly Concerns; but no matter for *that*. It is not fit that leaving a good Farm, or well accustomed Shop, or forsaking either Brethren, or Sisters, or Father, or Mother, should be put in Ballance against the *Edification and Salvation* of their Souls. And if, for their own private and particular Edification, they can dispense with themselves to *disturb the Peace of the Church, and tear it in Peices*, I think they may well submit to some Temporal Inconvenience, on the same good Account.

It was intimated before, that your Ministers have taken some *wise Measures and Precautions* to hinder the Operation of *this* Principle to their own hurt. This, Sir, is done by the Covenant before-mentioned, which your Independants, or Congregational Men bring their People into, to receive *them* for their Pastors, and to walk constantly with *them* in Christian Ordinances. I sometimes wonder within myself, that their People, who have so deeply imbibed this Notion; that their Salvation so much depends upon their having *the most Edifying Teaching*, should be so unreflecting and inconsiderate, as to suffer themselves to be drawn into any Engagements of this Sort, and to pin themselves down, perhaps for Life, to the Ministry of any one whatever. They should have considered, there is a good deal of *Delicacy and Fastidiousness* in their *Taste* of Preaching; and, therefore, that they could not be sure, that, *the first Relish being over*, he will appear to *them* as Edifying as
he

he does *now*; or, however, that there is, in most, such a Fickleness and Inclination to change, that they cannot be certain they shall like *any*, very long. And if they were sure they should always like him as well as they do at present; they cannot be sure, but some other Minister may be found, or come into the Country, before long, whom they may like still better, and think more Edifying than *he*, and that they may then have upon their Spirits a strong Impulse, and irresistible Incitation to put themselves under his Ministry, when they can't do it. They may humbly pray to be dismissed, averring and protesting, they have found a Gentleman by whom they can profit more, as possibly they may twenty, one after another; for, as ^aMr. Baxter observes, *there may be twenty Ministers; one abler than another in their several Degrees*; to say nothing of the *Humours and Caprices* of men, which will make the Difference between them appear still greater. I say, they may pray and plead for Dismission, but their Plea is not like to be admitted. They will, probably, be told, it is not allowed to be good, in the Churches; and be refer'd for this to *The Institution and the Orders appointed in them by Jesus Christ*, where Sect. 28. they will read thus, — *Persons that are joined in Church Fellowship ought not lightly, or without just Cause, to withdraw themselves from the Communion of the Church, whereunto they are so joined*; and then, the just and weighty

^a Defence of the Cure, Part I. Page 85.

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Causes for withdrawing, allowed to be such in *their Churches*, are thus enumerated. *Nevertheless, where any Person cannot continue in any Church without his Sin, either for want of the Administration of any Ordinance instituted by Christ, or by his being deprived of his due Privileges, or compelled to any thing in Practice not warranted by the Word, or in Case of Persecution, or upon the Account of Conveniency of Habitation, he, consulting with the Church or the Officer or Officers thereof, may peaceably depart.* — Here, Sir, you see, and *they* doubtless, will be bid to observe, is not a Syllable concerning departing, or being dismissed, *for better Edification.* And as that is a Case more likely to happen, and which, doubtless, does happen ten times oftener than any of those that *are* mentioned, we may be sure it would have been mentioned, and the same Indulgence of a peaceable Departure would have been allowed in this as in the other Cases, if the Reason for it had been esteemed sufficient. And then, in order to terrify them, they will, without Question, be put in Mind of the Covenant of God, *which they entred into before him, and his Holy Angels, and is recorded on high, to accept their present Pastors, and to walk with them in subjection to Christ's Appointment, and what a Sin it would be, if, from their own Fancy, Will, or Humour, they should break their Bond, and leave their Place.* But to make them easy, they will, probably, be told, in Conclusion, and earnestly desired to consider, that the Benefit of Sermons does not solely, or chiefly, depend upon the Gifts and Accomplishments of

of the Preacher, but on the good Dispositions of the Hearers, and the Blessing of God, that, under the Ministry of their present Pastors, nothing is wanting that is requisite to bring them to Salvation, and if they believe *that*, they *may* and *ought* to be content, in Consideration of the Peace and Quiet, which all good Christians ought to seek, and have a tender Regard to, and indeed, to the very being of the Churches, which must be dissolved and broken in Pieces, if all were to follow their Examples, and every Man to run from Minister to Minister, Church to Church, to find out, or under Pretext of having found out, better Means of Edification. This Doctrine is very likely to be delivered, and earnestly inculcated, on such Occasions; and, if it were rightly applied, is true, however unseemly it may appear in the Mouth of a Dissenting Minister, who has been, perchance, at proper Times and Places, continually countenancing and encouraging, if not openly teaching, a quite contrary one, and owes, it may be, no inconsiderable Part of his Congregation and Income to the Impressions made by it.

However, suppose the *general Plea* of better Edification should be allowed good; there may, yet, be Reason for not admitting it *in any particular Case that may happen*. Let it be remembered, as was observed above, that any Church-member is to be peaceably dismissed, *when the Case of the Person apparently requires it*; and put, then, the Case, that the Question is, whether a Member of Dr. Guise's Congregation (for Example) shall be allowed to de-

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part, for better Edification, to Mr. *Chandler's*, or, *vice versa*, one of Mr. *Chandler's* to Dr. *Guise's*. Now it may not be apparent to either of those Ministers, as it is to be before he is dismissed, that this Person *can edify better* under the Ministry of the other. Dr. *Guise* may think it even *impossible* he should profit more under Mr. *Chandler's*, and Mr. *Chandler* think it *equally impossible* he should be *better edified* and instructed under Dr. *Guise's* Ministry, and *his Manner of Preaching Christ*, than his own. This Supposition will hardly be thought unreasonable by any one, into whose Hands the Books of these two Gentlemen against each other concerning *the true Manner of Preaching Christ* shall happen to fall. And what is supposed of these two, may be as well supposed of any other two, who may adhere as obstinately to their respective Notions, and be as much divided in their Opinions and Sentiments about the Subject of *this Controversy*, as *they* were. And then if either *cannot*, or *will not* be satisfied, that any of their People may be better edified by the other, they must be content, for what I can see, to keep to their present Pastor, reconcile themselves to him, and make the best Use they can of such Instructions as he is able to give them.

I will put an End to this tedious Argument, with briefly relating an Affair touching the Subject we are now upon, between a late Dissenting Minister, and one of the Members of his Congregation. And though the Affair be *personal*, yet as it is *public*, and has
been

been many Years in *Print*, and both Parties are now, in all Probability, dead and gone, I hope I may do it without displeasing. The Gentleman, Sir, was Dr. *Williams*, he, who by his Writings against the pernicious Principles of the *Antinomians*, which with great Violence and Impetuosity were breaking in upon your Churches, reclaimed many, and gained to himself thereby much Credit, which, though it may seem a Deviation from the Matter in hand to mention, I was willing to take notice of, that it may appear to you, I am always disposed to give them their Due, and ready to acknowledge whatever Service they shall render to the Church of God. The Lady was a Widow, who had been solemnly joined to his Congregation by this Covenant; but upon some Account or other, no matter what, became weary of his Ministry, and had a great Desire to join herself to Mr. *Show-er's* Congregation. And by some Expressions in his Letter to her, such as *her grieving his Spirit, despising her Pastor, and weakening his Hands*, it should seem her Departure was *for the sake, or under the Pretence of better Edification*. But was this allowed a sufficient ground for her Departure? Far from it. It is declared to be *flight, such as Christ has no where allowed, such as no sober Christian ever leaves his Pastor upon, and she could have no Pleasure in, upon a Death-bed, or at the Bar of Christ*. He calls it her *Sin, which he, in real Friendship to her, would prevent, and gives her to understand, he should not omit publick Proceedings, if she was not reclaimed to her Duty,*
and

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and that he was sure, were he to give Notice of her Separation, none would admit her to the Lord's Table, 'till she could prove her Reasons valid. All the Use I am to make of this Narrative is only to shew, by a remarkable Example, that the Plea of more edifying Teaching for Separation is not accounted good by your own Ministers among themselves; unless I should further remark their Partiality (for I am loth to call it by any worse Name) when a Departure from one of their Churches to another, tho' it be for better Edification, is made so mighty a Matter, and so terrible a Sin, while a Departure from the established Church to any one of their Churches is reckoned none at all, but rather indeed a Matter of secret Joy and Exultation, even tho', too, it be notoriously known, that such a Departure was made for some *worldly Interest*, or from *Pique* and *Distaste*, or only from *Will* and *Wantonness*. — I go on now to some other Points in Difference between us.

In all the Writings, as well as Conversations, of your Friends, Sir, there is a mighty Cry against the *Impositions* of the Church, as they love to call them. Great is the *Magic* of Sounds and Words; and they are very sensible of this, as plainly appears by the Terms which they constantly affect to use to denote such Things in the Church as they are pleased to dislike. I omit all the rest, with which I fancy I could fill a Page, and keep to that I have just now mentioned, to wit, *Ecclesiastical Impositions*. These *Impositions* are only the *Laws*, *Injunctions*, or *Constitutions*, where-
by

by the *Worship* and *Discipline* of our Church are regulated. And why then do we not hear as much of the Mischief of *these*, as we do of the Mischief of *Impositions*? Why, the Reason is plain. Those Words have no *ill Idea* affix'd to them; and People would wonder where is the mighty *Mischief* of *Laws*, *Constitutions*, and *Injunctions*; very *harmless* things, they would think, and what may be very *useful* and *expedient*, if the Governors of the Church have but Sense enough to judge of *Expediency* and *Usefulness*. But *Impositions* is a Term of *ill Sound*, and has an *abhorred Idea* connected with it. And this is plainly the Reason that 'tis rung so continually in our Ears. And yet, after all, these *mischievous Impositions* seem to be common to all Churches; nor can I frame to myself any Notion of a formed regular Society of Christians, or of a worshipping Assembly, without *Impositions* of one kind or other. And, surely, you, Sir, have *yours*, as well as the Church *hers*, as you shall plainly see by what follows.

It seems as if *Law*, or *Canon*, or an *Injunction* from those in Authority, some way or other signified, always enters into, and makes Part of a *Dissenter's Idea* of an *Imposition*; as tho' it were impossible there could be any such thing, where any Practice or Usage is not bound upon Minister, or People, one of these ways. But, surely, this is wrong, and there may be an *Imposition*, at least upon the People, by the *mere Will and Pleasure* of the officiating Minister. And to make this plain to the meanest Understanding, I will suppose the

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the whole Constitution of the Church of England was dissolved, that the Clergy were released from all Obligation to use the *Common Prayer*, and at full Liberty to modify the publick Worship, each in his own Congregation, as he should think fit, but that they, nevertheless, were still of the Mind to use the Book of *Common Prayer* with all the *Rites and Ceremonies* thereof, just in the manner they now do. I would now ask you, Sir, whether, in such a Case, our *Impositions*, and your *Complaints* of them would be at an end, and cease. I am sure you would say, no; and that you of the Laity had, *now*, as much Reason for Complaint, as you had *before*, that indeed the Clergy *were* eased of all *Impositions*; by being left at Liberty to order the publick Worship their own Way, yet the old *Impositions* were still continued, if not by *Law*, yet, with equal Hardship, by the mere Will of the Clergy, upon the People, every *Rite and Ceremony* of the *Liturgy* being, *now*, to them, a Term of Communion, as much as ever, excluding all whom Christ is ready to receive, from Communion, unless they submit to it. If this be the Case, as it evidently is, 'tis plain, that *Law* and *Authority* are not in the *Notion*, nor have any thing to do in the *Definition* of an *Imposition*, and, consequently, that there may be real *Impositions*, where no *Authority* enforces them, but only the *Will* and *Practice* of their Ministers binds them upon the People. And if so, there may be, Sir, in your separate Congregations, *Impositions*, as well as in the Establish'd Church. — We will then see, if you please,

in some Particulars, whether, as there *may* be, so there *are* not *actually* such.

The Imposition of set Forms of Prayer is one of the most grievous you complain of; when yet, at Bottom, you are not such Enemies to it, as you seem to be. You know, the *Directory* was of *your own* imposing, and was imposed too, with much greater Rigour, than the *Common Prayer*, as may be seen in some of the Ordinances of Parliament for putting it in Execution. What Authority it has *now* among you, you best know. You hold it not, I suppose, at this time an *obliging* Rule; but you seem, generally, to esteem it a very *good* one, and, I guess, are pretty much guided and *directed* by it. And we are told by Dr. Calamy, in his *Brief and true Account of Protestant Dissenters in England* to his Divine in *Germany*, that the Examination and Ordination of Ministers, in particular, is managed according to the Rules laid down in it. Now the *Directory* is really a kind of a *Form of Prayer*. For it not only *directs* Ministers how they shall act and behave in all the Parts and Offices of publick Worship, but also suggests to them the very Matter and Substance of their Prayers and Exhortations, on every Occasion, as well as furnishes and puts into their Mouths just and suitable Expressions. And fain, Sir, would I see a Reason, why the establishing of *that* should not be esteemed as much an *Imposition*, as the injoining the use of the Common Prayer is.

After the Restoration, during the Memorable Savoy Conference, Mr. Baxter, that ready

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Writer, compiled, in a few *Weeks*, a new *Liturgy*, and with the other Commissioners on that side, presented an humble *Petition* (for so, belike, it was called) that it might be received and *imposed*, instead of the *Liturgy* we have. And those who may be supposed to know the Minds of the ejected Ministers perfectly well, seem not to doubt, but, in Case it had been *imposed*, most of them would have submitted to the *Imposition*, and taken to it very kindly.— See now, Sir, what their Pretences of *bearing their Testimony against all Impositions* are come to! And said not I true, that they were not, in their Hearts, such determined and irreconcilable Enemies to the *Imposition* of set Forms of Prayer, as, sometimes, they would appear to be? Let but a Form be of their own Devising, and they will think it mighty Reasonable the People should submit to it.

But, indeed, praying in the extemporary way is really *imposing* a Form of Prayer upon the Congregation. For such a Prayer is really a Form to *them*, as much as the *Common Prayer* would be, the first time they should be present at it. And if they consider the Thing, they will easily perceive, it is as much a Form *the first Time* as it will be *ever after*. The only Difference is, *the first Time* it is a *New Form*, and, *afterwards*, an *Old*. An extemporary Prayer, you'll say, is not imposed upon the Ministers. What then? 'Tis imposed *by* the Ministers; and that's worse. Though, after all, I don't see how it can be otherwise, but that the People must have a Form *imposed* upon them *by somebody*

somebody, unless they could all agree about a Form among themselves, either once for all, or every time they meet together, and then deliver it to the Minister, to be, by him, presented unto God. But then, do we not see, that, in this Case, *they* would *impose* it upon *him*? When all is done, 'tis impossible, in the Nature of Things, but that, in all public and social Prayer, a set Form must be imposed *by*, and *upon*, some or other. With *us*, indeed, it is imposed *both upon Minister, and People*; with *you* upon the People only; and the Ministers, the great Complainants of our Impositions, are, *themselves*, the Imposers. And while we have one constant and unvaried Form imposed, which we can consider and examine, and before we offer it up to God, approve of, which makes it in some Sense our own, *you* have a thousand Forms *imposed* upon you, a new one, if it be really new, and your Ministers do not cheat you every time you go to Meeting, one, too, which you have no time to examine, but must join in, let it be what it will, fitting or unfitting, the Moment it comes out of his Mouth.

I am aware, Sir, there is great talk among you in behalf of free Prayer, as you call it, that it secures Attention and Devotion, while Forms of Prayer produce Indifferency, Coldness, and Formality of Spirit. But I am not of your Mind in regard to either. If by Attention you mean a close Application of the Mind to the Matter, or the Language of the Prayer, for Example, canvassing, examining, exercising the Judgment about the fitness of it, watching for new Matter, or cu-

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rious Expression, striving to retain and lay them up in your Memories, that you may afterwards review, or, perhaps, use them, *this sort of Attention* I would not have secured, because it is evidently a Hinderance to *another Sort of Attention* which alone one would desire to secure, *to wit*, a close Application of the Mind *to praying*. For while the entire Attention of the Mind is taken up, and the whole Force of it spent and wasted in these curious Disquisitions, Enquiries and Speculations concerning the Matter or Phraseology of the Prayer, there will be no room for any such Act or Operation of it as praying is, no Possibility of speaking the Prayer to God, of Personally offering up to, and presenting before him the several Requests, and Supplications of it. And as to Devotion, *that* is neither promoted by *all* free Prayer, nor hindred by *all* Forms. You must be sensible, Sir, and I think you must know from your own Experience, there are *some free Prayers* which will cause an Indifferency and Coldness of Spirit, if nothing worse, at *first* hearing. And I can assure you, if you know it not already, there are *some Forms*, which one may use without Indifferency and Coldness, and indeed with a lively Emotion of Spirit *all ones Life long*. In the *antient Forms* of the Church, and therefore in *ours*, which are mostly antient, there is a Strength, an Energy, a Savour, an Unction, I know not what to call it, not to be found in the Composition of modern Prayers, not even those (begging the Pardon of the Composers) which are premeditated, and drawn up with
Deli-

Deliberation, and much less of others that are unpremeditated and extemporaneous. For Instance, the *Te Deum* of St. *Ambrose*, which we, you know, have received into our *Liturgy*. For my own Part, I am not yet, after more than the thousandth time of using it, tired with it; and now, when I rehearse it in the Church, am otherwise elevated and affected with the noble Simplicity thereof, than I am fully persuaded I ever should be by the most trim, polite, or spirited Orations of your popular and admired Ministers, and much less by the *flatter* or *coarser* ones of, many others. I may also instance in divers other Parts of our daily Service and in the whole of the Communion Office, which some of yourselves have allow'd to be admirable, and I will venture to say none can use, though he had used it before ever so often, with any Formality or Deadness of Spirit, unless he has a Heart so frozen, and utterly estranged from all Devotion, as to be incapable of being wrought up to it by any means whatever.

If it were, Sir, in the Nature of a Form, as such, to cause a Coldness and Indifferency in the Use of it, *all* Forms, those of Divine as well as of Human Composition, and therefore the Lord's Prayer, would have that Effect. But will you presume to fix *that* Imputation upon it? Or do you find, by your own Experience, it is liable to, and deserves it? When your Ministers use that Prayer, concluding their own with it (as some of them do) do you perceive your *Attention* begin to
slacken,

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slacken, your *Devotion* to *abate*, and *Formality*
to creep upon you, as soon as he enters upon
it? I hope not. Or do you think you could
not *now* read, or hear, or use other Scriptural
Prayers and Confessions of Sin, such as that
of *Daniel* for his own Sin, and the Sin of his
People, with the same *Attention* and *Devotion*
you *once* could, when you had not read or
heard it so often, as you now have? And when
other Scriptures are read in your Meetings,
as sometimes, I suppose, they are, are they
the less attended to, or heard with the less
Devotion, by yourself, or others, for your
having been conversant therein from your
Youth, and now become familiarly acquainted
with them? Or are those Portions of Scripture
with which you are less acquainted more re-
garded, and reverently heard, and apt to im-
press and affect you more, than such Parts of
it as are intimately and thoroughly known to
you? And do you also find yourself, or are
your Congregations generally observed to be
more fervent and devout at the Prayers, than
at the Psalmody of the Church? I fancy, Sir,
you will own, there is as great an *Appearance*
of Devotion in *this*, as in *that* Part of your
Worship, notwithstanding *this* is carried on
by well known Forms, such as the People,
generally, are, before-hand, acquainted with.
And if your Ministers found or thought it
otherwise, surely they would provide, as they
easily might, against that Inconvenience. It
might easily be done, by making a vast Col-
lection of Psalms and Hymns, which should
be in their own keeping, and giving them
out

out to be sung every Lord's Day, or every time of your assembling, taking care, however, that no one of them should come over again oftner than once in some Years, when it may be presumed to be quite forgotten, and appear to the Congregation as new, as if it had been conceived that Morning. But as your Ministers seem to have no thought of using this, or any other Expedient for preventing Indifferency and Formality in Singing, it may be fairly concluded they are not aware of any such Danger, and have no Apprehension that *the continual treading one constant Road of Sentences, or track of Expressions* has, in Psalmody, any considerable Aptness *to make your Spirits cold and flat, formal and indifferent in your Devotion.* And if they think it has *not*, in Psalmody, I can see no reason why they should think it *has*, in Prayer. Then again, I perceive they have no general Exception to precomposed Forms in secret, or Family Devotion, nor yet in Prayer, or Grace, as we call it, before or after Meat, but do, themselves, I presume, when they sit down to eat, generally use one and the same Form, or with little Variation of Expression, though they are very sensible, that Prayer and Thanksgiving, on these Occasions, is much apter to run into Formality, and to be perform'd with a Slowness and Indifferency of Spirit, than on any other whatsoever. And this mighty Zeal against Forms, in behalf of free and conceived Prayer, in the Pulpit, while they are so indifferent about them, on some other Occasions, where there is greater Danger of Indifferency
and

and Lukewarmness, would make one think, or, at least, suspect, it is not so much for *increasing* the *Devotion* as the *numbers* of their People, for making a display of their Gifts, and *so* drawing Disciples after them.

Nor does it appear to me there is more Reason in that other Pretence, that the several Dispensations of God's Providence, the various Changes and Alterations in the Affairs of a *Nation*, or of a *Person*, requiring suitable Petitions and Acknowledgments, cannot be well provided for in prescribed Compositions, but only in free Prayer. For these may be easily foreknown, and proper Prayers or Thanksgivings provided for them, as is done, tolerably well, in our Liturgy; and in extraordinary Conjunctions, special Forms may be composed on purpose, as is also done, occasionally, as you very well know, by the Archbishops and Bishops of our Church. And as to particular Persons, their Infirmities and Sorrows, whether of Mind or Body, and their grateful Acknowledgments of Relief and Comfort received under each of them may be suited by proper Forms, or remembered under large and general Expressions. You think, I suppose, this is not enough, but that the Particularities of each one's Case should be represented, display'd, and spread before God, and the Congregation. But, Sir, there's no Occasion for it; and sometimes when it has been done, it had been much better let alone. Stories go about of special Cases having been particularized and explicated in such a manner, as has been justly esteem'd ridiculous,

lous, and very offensive to the Congregation. And such is the scantling of some People's Judgment and Discretion, that they may be easily believed. This, however, is certain, that set Forms may be so framed as to comport much better with extraordinary Cases and Occasions, than free Prayer can with common and ordinary ones. A precomposed Form may comprehend a vast Variety of Matter, and all the common Wants and Desires of a Christian may be collected and taken into it, which is impossible to be done in an extemporary and unpremeditated Prayer; for that will contain nothing but what comes into the Man's Heart, or Head, during the Time of Praying. And if we suppose he premeditates, and forecasts in his Mind the whole Matter of his Prayer, and means to take in *all Things that be requisite and necessary as well for the Body as the Soul*, he will be apt to forget many things when he comes to be engaged in the Duty. And, accordingly, I doubt most of your Prayers are very barren of Matter, compared with the Fullness of our Liturgy. We pray therein for all Kinds of Blessings, and deprecate all Sorts of Evil, spiritual and temporal: We pray for *Peace, Unity, and Concord to all Nations*: We pray for our own Church and Nation, for the King's Majesty, that he may be richly and *plenteously endued with all Heavenly Gifts*, that he may *live long in Health and Wealth*, overcome all his Enemies, govern his own Subjects *quietly and godly*, and finally attain *everlasting Felicity* for himself: For his Royal Issue we also pray, that they too may

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be endued with Heavenly Grace, prospered here with all Happiness, and come hereafter to the Kingdom of God: For the High Court of Parliament, that all their Consultations may be as well prospered as directed to the Advancement of God's Glory, and the Welfare of the Kingdom; for all in Authority, that they may use the Power that is committed to them for the ministering of Justice indifferently and impartially, and for the Maintenance of Virtue and true Religion: For the Church universal, beseeching God that he would rule and govern it in the right Way, and continually inspire it with the Spirit both of Truth and Concord, and that all who name the Name of Christ may agree in the Truth of his holy Word, and live together in holy Love and godly Unity: For the Bishops and all the Clergy, that God would pour continually upon them his Grace and Blessing, and illuminate them with true Knowledge, that in their Doctrine his true and lively Word may be set forth, and exhibited, accordingly, in their own Conversations. We pray that all the Crafts and Subtleties both of wicked Men and Devils against the Church of God, may be dispersed and brought to nought, that, being hurt by no Persecutions, we may be evermore at liberty to serve him in it. We intercede with God that he would have Mercy upon all Men, that he would keep and preserve all who are exposed to Danger whether by Land or Water, the Woman labouring with Child, the Sick, the Prisoner, the Captive, the Orphan, and the Widow, and that he would succour all under their several Necessities, Desolations, and Oppressions.

We

We plead also for our *Enemies*, for *those who persecute us*, and speak evil of us, that God would *forgive them* their past Wickedness, and *turn their Hearts* from it, for the future: For those who *stand* and manfully resist the Assaults, the Crafts, and Temptations of the Devil, that they may be yet *more strengthened*; for the *weak-hearted*, and feeble-minded, who have been sometimes foiled, and are growing faint with the Combat, that they may be *comforted* and supported; and for the actually *fallen*, that they may be *raised again*, and all of us *tread down Satan under our Feet*. We make, too, our Supplications in behalf of those who have wilfully and obstinately *erred*, and those also, Sir, who, with pure Intentions, like your own, *have been deceived*, that God would give them Repentance to the Acknowledgment of the Truth, and *bring them back into the Way of it*. In regard to *Temporals*, we pray, as we are taught to do, for our *daily Bread*, for the *Preservation of the Fruits of the Earth*, that in due Time we may enjoy them. We pray, that we may be *defended in all the Assaults of our Enemies*, that we may not run, in the Day, into any kind of Danger, and be delivered from the *Perils of the Night*; and that we may also be delivered from all *Sedition, Conspiracy, and Rebellion*, and from those fearful Calamities of *Pestilence and Famine, Battle and Murder*, with which God often visits a sinful People, and which we have too righteously deserved. In reference to *Spirituals*, we never assemble without making an humble Confession of all our Sins, those of Omission as

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well as of *Commission*, beseeching God to *have*
Mercy upon us, to *spare* us, and *restore* us,
and to *give* us *true Repentance* that we may
live hereafter a godly, righteous, and sober Life,
to his Glory. We pray that we may not be
led into Temptation, and have *Strength* to re-
sist it, that we may be *delivered from all Blind-*
ness and Hardness of Heart, and from that *Con-*
tempt of God's Holy Word and Commandments,
which is now so prevalent and fashionable a-
mong us. We pray to be *delivered from He-*
resy and Schism; from those *Spiritual Sins* of
Envy, Hatred, Malice, Uncharitableness, Vain-
glory of Temper, Pride of Mind, and Hypo-
crisy of Heart; and from the *fleshy ones* of
Fornication, Uncleaness, Lasciviousness, and all
other Sins of the more deadly Sort, which they
who do shall not inherit the Kingdom of God;
and from those also which most easily beset us
in the *Time of our Tribulation* as well as in the
Time of our Prosperity and Wealth. And that
we may be preserved from all these Sins, and
enabled to *amend our Lives according to God's*
Holy Word, we beg of him to *grant us his*
Holy Spirit, and to *cleanse our Hearts by its In-*
spiration, to give us *Peace of Conscience which*
the World cannot give, to give us *Grace and*
Increase of Grace, to give us *Hearts both to love*
and dread him, and to *incline them to keep each*
Law of the Ten Commandments. In regard
to *Eternal Things*, we pray him to *deliver us*
in the Hour of Death, and in the Day of Judg-
ment, and to *grant us, in the World to come,*
Life everlasting. In regard to the *common Sup-*
plications we have been making unto him, we
beseech

befeech him to fulfil the *Desires and Petitions* of his *Servants*, and in regard to the Word read or preach'd, we alfo humbly befeech him to give us *Grace* that we may bear it meekly, receive it with pure *Affection* and due *Reverence*, and bring forth the *Fruits of the Spirit*. Nor do we ever fail to blefs and praife him for our *Creation, Prefervation, and all the Bleffings of this Life, for the Redemption of the World by our Lord Jefus Chrift, for the Means of Grace, and for the Hopes of Glory.* —

These Things, which I have thrown together with little Order and Connexion, omitting many others which it would have been almoft endless to recount, you will grant, I fuppofe, to be fit matter for the common Prayers and Supplications of the Church; and I now, Sir, put it to you, if you have ever found fo great a Variety of Matter in any one of your ordinary Prayers. I doubt, fome half a dozen, or very few more, of thefe Particulars, fet off with a Multiplicity of Words, and, perhaps, fome — Repetitions, will be fufficient Matter for one of your Prayers. And, indeed, I muft fay, it behoves your Minifters to be as fparing as they can of the Matter of their Prayers, that they may not be always Praying for the *same Things*. For a *constant Round of the same Things*, may be, 'tis like, as tirefome and difgufting to *their Audiences*, and caufe as much Coldnefs in *their Spirits*, as a *constant Round of the same Phrafes and Exprefions*.

I muft beg, Sir, your leave that I may briefly take notice of one thing more, and I
 desire

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desire it the rather, because I am not aware it has yet been observed by any of our Writers. You must be sensible that in all our larger Congregations, more especially those in Town, as well of Non-Conformists as Conformists, there must be many at a considerable Distance from the officiating Minister, and almost *out of hearing*; and what for *Coughing*, *Hawking*, and *Spitting within* Doors, and Noises from *without*, it will be impossible for these to go along with the Minister, in any Form that is *new* to them, and still less, if he happens to have a weak and low Voice, as many of your Ministers, and some, Sir, of your own Friends, as I am informed, have: and the same may be said of others, who are nearer the Minister, if their Hearing be, in any degree, by Age or Disease, impaired: but a very imperfect Hearing will serve both one and t'other to join with him in any Form which they are well acquainted with, and have almost by heart. Nay, Sir, one who is quite deaf, by means of certain Helps that may be had, may, tolerably well, accompany the Minister in the Use of our Liturgy. You know, Sir, this is the Case of Mrs. F—— and I have sometimes observed with a Mixture of Pity and Pleasure, how, by *the Help of her Bible*, and *Common-Prayer Book*, by observing the *Motions and Gestures* of the Congregation, and the *Lips* of the Minister, she has gone along with him throughout the whole Service, and have been told, she is very rarely thrown out, and, when she is, soon recovers herself, and comes up again with the Congregation.

gation. Now, Sir, I pray tell me, what should she do at one of your Meetings, where she could have no other benefit from *your Prayers*, than she has now (poor Lady) from *our Sermons*. You must needs confess all these People are *fairly ours*; and you ought to resign them to us. Nay, you are obliged, and that in pursuance of your own Principle, to tell them as plainly as you do some others whom you have less Reason to tell so, that *they ought to go thither where they can most profit*; and that is certainly at Church; even supposing your Ministers endowed with the Gift and Grace of Prayer in a supreme Degree, and to be the ablest Teachers in the World, and their own Parish Ministers the most meanly furnished with all Pastoral Abilities and Accomplishments.

In the next place, Sir, you say, *Kneeling at the Sacrament* is an *Imposition*; and the *Avoidance* of Kneeling insisted upon by your Ministers, is not less (I say) an *Imposition*, than our *injoining* it: and Dr. *Watts* himself, does in effect, admit *this*. He observes, that, *to our universal Reproach, there is scarce any Party of Christians but has been too ready to impose some Doctrines upon the Belief of their Profelytes which Christ has not imposed, or to require of them some Practices, or some Abstinences about Meats, or Days, or Things indifferent, which Christ has not required*^a. We have, here, not only a plain Acknowledgment that an imposing Spi-

^a Humble Attempt, &c. pag. 47.

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rit is no peculiar and distinguishing Character of the Church of *England*, and that there is scarce any Church without it (which is something to my Purpose) but also (which is more to my Purpose) a Confession, that whatever Church shall require an *Abstinence from*, or an *Avoidance* of any thing *indifferent*, is as much guilty of an *Imposition*, as if the *positive Practice* of that thing was required. And if so, your Churches must be esteemed guilty of it, in requiring an *Abstinence from Kneeling*; unless it can be shewn, that that Gesture is not *indifferent*, and some Law of *Christ*, or Command in the Gospel, can be pointed out, obliging to the Observance of any one Gesture, in particular.

But not content with this, you do really *impose* the Observance of *one particular Gesture* upon *your Communicants*, and expect they should *conform* to it. You will allow me, Sir, to bring against you *your own Directory*, once more; and by *that*, *sitting* is *imposed*, as much as *kneeling* is, by the Common Prayer. For thus it says, *The Table being decently covered, and so conveniently placed, that the People may orderly sit about it.* And if it were not imposed by *that*, it is truly and properly *imposed* (as was shewn above) by the regular unvaried practice of your Churches, by your Ministers *requiring*, and *insisting upon* it, and *refusing to abate* of it. If one should present himself to take the Sacrament *standing*, but, especially, should he presume to offer to take it *upon his Knees*, I put it to you, Sir, whether you don't think he would undergo some close Arguings,
and

and severe Expostulations, and be plainly told; that since he *seemed to be contentious, you had no such Custom, neither the Churches of God.* And I put it to your Ministers, whether they *would*, should he continue obstinately in that Posture, *give it him at all.* I have indeed reason to believe there are some few in a freer and juster way of thinking concerning this, and some other Matters in Controversy between us, and who would not scruple to give the Sacrament kneeling to one who should earnestly desire it; but I dare say, the Bulk and Gross of them are as rigid as Mr. *Baxter* in this particular, and would no more give it so than he was willing to do. It seems, there were some who had a Mind to take it of *him*, but *kneeling*. He did not care to give it them, in that Posture; at which a certain Gentleman was so offended, as to become a great Opposer of his re-establishment as *Kedermister*, after the Restoration. Nor would he ever yield to let them receive it *so*; unless they would do it, at the same time with others who received *sitting*. But this, belike, they scrupled to do; so, he would not give it them at all. Dr. *Calamy* in his Abridgment of the Life of Mr. *Baxter* (p. 296. 2^d Edit.) relates such a Story of him; not, I assure you, Sir, with any Blame, but with evident Tokens of his Approbation of this Stiffness. Could such a Conduct and Behaviour, and such a manifest Approbation of it, have been ever expected from two such Advocates for Condescension to scrupulous Consciences, two such Abhorrrers of Impositions, as Mr. *Baxter*, and Dr. *Calamy* were? Though,

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indeed, with Mr. Baxter it was a common Thing to destroy the Things he had before built, to be inconsistent with himself, and contradict his own Principles.

And now, Sir, having thrown back your charge of Imposition in regard to the Posture of receiving, and, as I humbly conceive, made it appear, that, if *our Church imposes one, your Churches impose, as truly and properly, another*, we will consider, if you please, your great and popular Objections to that Posture which is imposed by *us*, and try if these also may not be strongly retorted upon you.

The Posture, (you say) wherein we receive is not conformable to our Lord's Example in the Institution and first Administration of this Sacrament, that it first grew out of the monstrous Doctrine of Transubstantiation, is, therefore, a Popish Ceremony, and, yet, abused to serve the Purposes of Idolatry, and naturally tending to it. To the first I reply, that if it is not conformable to the Example of our Lord, in the Institution, it is not necessary it should, unless it can be shewn, that he meant, in the Posture he used at the Institution, to set us an Example, that we should do, as he then did. I don't know any other Medium whereby this is attempted to be shewn, besides the Words of our Saviour, do this. And do they shew it? Can any reasonable Man believe, those Words had any further reference than to the Rites, and Sacramental Actions, wherewith the Institution was performed, or that they are to be extended to the very Gesture. It may be as well supposed, they are

to be extended to all other *Accessories*, or *Appendant Circumstances* of the Institution. Why, Sir, do you not contend for the Use, after our Saviour's Example, of *unleavened Bread*? There being as good Proof, and, I think, better, that *he* administred with this, as that he did it in the Gesture *you* imagine. And how comes it, that you hold not the necessity of using *Wine mixt with Water*? For the Presumption of his using such, at that time, is as strong, as of his using the Gesture before mentioned. Why don't you plead for celebrating only in an *upper Room*, only in the *Evening*, and that too immediately *after a full Meal*, as our Lord is supposed to have administred *presently* after eating the *Paschal Feast*? Why do any of you allow of Sacraments in the *Morning*, and perhaps *fasting*? Why do you ever admit more than can sit at *one Table*, or than *twelve* Communicants, the number of the Apostles, at one time? And why any *Women*? For there were none here. Don't you see, Sir, to what lengths of Absurdity this kind of Reasoning will run, and what Whimsies it inevitably leads to? And I wonder your People have not been yet led into them. What can be the Cause of their stopping short, and not pursuing their Reasoning as far as it will go, into other Things, the necessity of which may be demonstrated, the same way? There must be some Reason for *this*; and if you will give me leave, I will presume to guess *what*. I doubt, they have some Suspicions of the Goodness and Solidity of this way of Arguing, and are, therefore, so honest, as not to use it a bit farther

than there is present Occasion for, that is, no farther than is just necessary to keep up the Separation between us.

But how, Sir, after all, are *you* more conformable than *we*, in this particular, to our Saviour's Practice and Example? It is not so certain as you seem to fancy, that he administered, and the Disciples received in the same Posture wherein they ate the Passover. It is not said they did; nor can it be fairly, from any Circumstances, collected. The Posture, for what we can tell, might be changed, and there is some probability it was, because, between the Passover and the Supper, the *Blessing* of the Elements, or *giving of Thanks* intervened; and one would hardly imagine that was done in the recumbent Posture. But let it be so, and let all be supposed done in that Posture (I shall not need, I presume, to describe it to you) how can it be said *your* Practice is conformable thereto? I thought, Sir, you had received *sitting*. Is it not really so? But if it is, what Agreement and Conformity, I pray, is there between our *Lord's* and *your* Practice? It is not enough to say, *his* was a Table-gesture in *that* Country, and so is *yours* in *this*. For if *Do this* has any reference to the Gesture, it certainly directs to that *particular* and *precise* Gesture that was then using. And if that, in these Parts of the World, be not a Table-Gesture, it, surely, ought, by Virtue of this Precept, as understood by *you*, to be made so, at least in the Participation of this Supper.

One Thing more upon this Head it may be proper to observe concerning your Ministers, and their manner of receiving. It must be admitted, and, I suppose, will, at least 'till the Uses to be made of such a Concession shall be pointed out, that *they* are as much obliged, as *their People*, to conform themselves to the Gesture wherein our Lord instituted this Sacrament. Now they, whatever *others* may think, don't allow, I suppose, that *he* ever changed *his* Posture, but contend, that he kept constantly in the *recumbent Posture*, during the whole time of the Institution, even then when he was *blessing and giving Thanks*. To be conformable, therefore, to this Example, (if sitting, as they say, be really conforming to it) the Ministers, the Administrators, ought to *sit*, and that *always*, and *never once* rise up from their Seats during the whole Service. But do they do so? I doubt *not*. However, you, Sir, know better than I, whether they do, or not. This I observe, Sir, in your *Directory*, that it orders the Communicants to *sit at the Table*; but when it speaks of the Minister by himself, it only orders that he be *at the Table*, when he himself communicates, and distributes the Bread to others. From whence it should seem, it was not expected, or however, not required as necessary, he should be *sitting*, but that it was sufficient, if he were only *at or about* the Table in any Way or Posture whatsoever. Now, Sir, will you please to inform me whether your Ministers hold themselves obliged to *sit always*, as our Saviour, they pretend, was *always* in the *recumbent* Posture,

Posture, or whether they think they may take the liberty, *sometimes, to stand*, as, particularly, at the time of their own receiving, (as I have been informed some have done) or all the time they are *Sanctifying the Elements*, making their *Exhortations* to the People, or their *Prayers* and *Thanksgivings* unto God; and whether, in your larger Congregations, where the Communicants are so numerous that hardly, perhaps, a tenth Part can *sit at the Table* (for, I presume, you have no where more than one) they do not walk about the meeting from Pew to Pew, distributing the Elements to such of the Communicants as are sitting there. And if they do this, whether you think there be in it any such strict Conformity to our Lord's Practice and Example, as you exact of *us*. If they ever walk about the Meeting from one Pew to another, with the Elements in their Hands, or if they only stand while they are stirring up the People, or blessing God, these are, according to their own way of Arguing, manifest Deviations from that Example. But if they stand, too, *in the Act of Receiving*, the Deviation must be acknowledged to be still greater.

I come now to the other Objection against Kneeling set forth above, concerning the *Po-pery* thereof; and I assure you, Sir, that, in every Part of it, your Friends are greatly mistaken. As to its *growing out of the Doctrine of Transubstantiation*, it is a great deal too old, to have that Original. Nor can it properly be called, on any other Account, a *Po-pish Ceremony*. It is, indeed, practised, and so
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is *standing* and *sitting* too, on certain Occasions, by one or other, in that Church. One of their Orders, if *Didaclevius* say true^a, and, I think, he would hardly romance to the manifest Injury of his Cause, take the Sacrament, sometimes, *sitting*. And the sovereign Pontiff, at certain times, takes it *so*, and *standing*, at other Times; and I don't know that he ever takes it upon his Knees. In one Sense, therefore, they are *all Popish Ceremonies*, in another, *neither* of them. They are *all Popish*, in the Sense of their being *all*, at some Time, or by some Person or other, used and practised in that Church; and *none of them Popish*, in the Sense of its being an Error, or Corruption, or an Abomination peculiar to it. And as to its serving the Purposes of Idolatry in that Church, it would be, I think, strictly enjoined, and greater Strefs than there appears to be would be laid upon it, if it really did. It is so far from being *strictly enjoined*, that it is *not enjoined at all*. There is not one Canon, nor any one Rubrick, as we have been assured, in all its Liturgies, and Offices, injoining it, in the Act of receiving; and from the Diversity of their Practice before observed, as well as from the Silence of their great Writers, who have treated so largely of the Eucharist, concerning the *right Posture* in receiving, one may fairly conclude, they look upon the Posture as a Matter of no moment. *Bellarmino*, Sir, I have turned over,

^a Altare Damasc. c. x. p. 746.

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who seems to have taken in every thing that has any relation to the Eucharist; but he has not a Syllable that I can find about Kneeling at the Time of receiving; no, not there, where he professedly sets himself to enumerate all the Ceremonies of the Mass: I have also consulted the *Roman Catechism* composed by order of the *Trent Council*; where also there is not a Word about it. And yet, in both, some very minute and inconsiderable Matters, such as communicating fasting; in Unleavened Bread, and Wine mix'd with a small Quantity of Water, are treated of; and in one these Points are enlarged upon; and strenuously maintained. A plain Sign, they make little Account of this Posture; in the Act of Receiving, and have no mighty Purposes of Idolatry to be served by it, but that all their Purposes of that Sort are thought to be sufficiently answered by the People's falling down before the Host, *when the little Bell rings*, at the *Elevation*, or at *Processions*. At the Time of receiving, the Church neither prescribes Adoration, nor seems to expect it; at least, not the Adoration of the Host: And indeed I don't perceive that it looks for, at that Time, *any* Adoration, whether of God the Father of all, or of *Jesus Christ* in Heaven.

But since we are, Sir, upon all Purposes to be served by the Posture of kneeling, I must beg leave to inform you, or to put you in remembrance of some Purposes, not very good ones I hope you will own, that were *really meant* to be served by *sitting* at the Lord's Table.

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To be even with you, Sir, I must tell you, this Posture grew out of the monstrous Doctrine of Socinus, who, with his Followers, introduced it into the Protestant Churches, and with an horrible Intent of throwing Contempt upon the Divinity of the Lord Jesus. For looking upon him as a mere Man, they were minded, it seems, to sit down with him, as their Fellow, at his Table. Upon which account, sitting at the Holy Table was condemned, in very severe Terms, as *indecent, scandalous, irreligious*, and against the Custom of all the reformed Churches, and either *standing* or *kneeling* was decreed in two Polish Synods. And if one considers the restless Endeavours that have been used to propagate formerly *Socinianism* and more lately *Arianism*, both of them Heresies in opposition to the Godhead of our Lord, and the Disposition of too many in the Nation to fall in with them, and, at the same time, the universal Abhorrence and Detestation that Bread-Worship is in among us, one may easily see worse Consequences are likely to follow from the way of sitting, than from the kneeling Posture.

Since we are upon the Subject of Gestures, it would not, methinks, be amiss to make a short Digression (if indeed it be a Digression) concerning your *not kneeling at publick Prayer*, any more than at the Sacrament. Standing at Prayer, in all separate Congregations, is a Posture so universal (unless some sit) so much countenanced, and, on all Occasions justified in the People, that it seems to amount to little less than an *Imposition*. One cannot, indeed,

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much wonder, that the generality of *your* People should fall into it. Many do so, in *our* Churches, where they are taught better. It is confessedly a Posture somewhat more decent than *sitting* at Prayer; and therefore a Posture wherein they vainly imagine they can reconcile some sort of external Regard to the Duty they are about, with their own Ease and Indolence. But that *your* People should universally, the most serious and devout as well as others, fall into it, is surprizing, and can be accounted for no other way, than by the *Countenance* and *Encouragement* that is given to it by your Ministers, who, instead of *reprehending* and *remonstrating* against it, say all they can to *palliate* and *excuse* it. The humble Posture of kneeling Nature itself so plainly dictates, and so powerfully prompts us to, that a Man, if he were left to himself, whenever he spreads his Sins and Sorrows before God, or makes his Requests known to him, will hardly do it in any other. The Body, on such Occasions, almost mechanically, and without the actual Volition of the Mind, *falls down before the Lord its Maker*, and scarce ever fails to do so, but when some *affected Restraint* is laid upon it.

Your Friend, Sir, Dr. *Watts* has given us the whole Doctrine and Theory of Prayer conformable to the Sentiments and Practices of Dissenters; and he divides it into no less than eight several Parts, to wit, *Invocation, Adoration, Confession of Sin, Petition, Pleading with God, Self-Dedication to him, Thanksgiving, and blessing of him*. Now, it is easy to see, that
Prayer,

Prayer, or speaking to God, cannot properly be done all these ways, in any one Gesture, which, nevertheless, is unavoidable, as your Ministers order the Matter, by blending and throwing them all promiscuously together, in one uniform continued Prayer. But if the whole *must* be done in one and the same Gesture, sure it should rather be that which suits the far greater Part, as kneeling evidently does, especially, too, when that is much more expressive of our profound Reverence for God and a stronger Testification, in the Face of the World, of the entire Subjection of our Souls to him. If I might be permitted to be so free, as to suggest to these Gentlemen one Thought, methinks, I would recommend it to their Consideration, whether, since they have, generally, a Prayer after Sermon, as well as before, it would not be best, at one of those times, to use such of these kinds of Prayer as seem to require *kneeling*, reserving for the other such sorts of it as may be performed, not improperly, in the *standing* Posture, and then *stand forth*, and *honestly* tell their People, it would become them to compose themselves to those Gestures, accordingly. Such a Difference and *Propriety* of Behaviour would not, I hope, marr your Worship, but greatly improve, and add a natural Splendor and Beauty to it. But alas, Sir, I speak in vain. Kneeling, though it be in *Confession*, or when you are under an *uncommon Sense of Guilt*, on account (for example) of National Sins or Calamities, and when *Prostration* itself, if that would be convenient in a publick and mixt Assembly, would not be improper, is

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never practised. And should any one, even you, Sir, *presume* to do it, I am pretty confident the rest would not be *pleased* with you. *Not pleased*, did I say? They would certainly *censure and condemn* you; and I know not, Sir, whether the Superiority of your Understanding, confessed by all that know you, would, in this Case, exempt you from the Imputation of a most *weak and pitiful Superstition*. Neither is this a groundless and unreasonable Suggestion. For one considerable Congregation of Dissenters I can name, whereof there is a Member, who rightly judges it as fit to kneel at her *Publick*, as at her *Private*, or *Family Prayer*, and practises accordingly, but to the great *Scandal* of the Congregation, who almost with she would go over to the Church, rather than continue among *them* to be the Occasion of so great and general *Offence*. This mighty averseness to *kneeling at publick Prayer*, when you always practise it in private, may appear to some perfectly whimsical: But I, who pretend to have studied you somewhat more than every Body has, am satisfied, there is a substantial Reason for it. It is plainly, Sir, a *politic Avoidance* of too much *Symbolizing* with the Church of *England*. As *we* kneel at *Church*, you must *not* do it at *Meeting*. And if standing had been a *Church Imposition*, and the *general approved* way of our Religious Assemblies, you, no doubt, would have taken to *Kneeling*, and been well pleased, as you would have had reason, that the fittest and most suitable Posture had been *left* for you. It is thought expedient, that your Worship should have a *Face different*
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from ours, tho' it be *much worse*, that so it may *allure* and *draw in* those, to whose Taste or Humour the external Order of the Church is not so well suited.

And as the total Disuse of Kneeling at your publick Prayer is a likely means to draw in some of *our* People, who have no Relish at all of such a Ceremony (perhaps from an awkward rustic Bashfulness, or from some secret Consciousness, that they want that inward mental Devotion which this Gesture expresses, and makes Profession of, so it helps to keep those who have been always with you - in *a greater Indisposition for Conformity*. By never having been, themselves, upon their Knees, in their Publick Assemblies, they contract an Unaptness for it, and a kind of Aversion to it; and never seeing it done by others, no, not by those who are accounted among you the most devout, nor hearing it recommended by your Ministers, they presently conclude there must be, for certain, something that is bad, and, in all likelihood (for 'tis a mighty Word with them, though they know not what it means) some *Superstition* in it. Hence that lothness to go, even occasionally, to our Churches, where they must either kneel, or appear singular: The former they know not how to bring themselves to, nor do they mightily *like* the latter: Whereas, had they been trained up and accustomed to fall down upon their Knees, at their own Public Prayer, they would have been apt to do the same, when they appear, occasionally, at *ours*. This would lead them, almost unavoidably,

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voidably, to *join* in our Prayers; and then the *liking* them, with great Probability, would follow. This, I doubt, is the Danger apprehended, and to be guarded against; and really Sir, I must tell you, and you cannot but own, it does not look well, but has a scurvy Appearance, to let your Worship be rather debased, than run any Hazard of lessening the Number of your Worshippers.

One may guess, and, indeed, easily believe, you have another Reason for this Conduct. If you were to be taught, and come to think, it was *fit and right to kneel at your Prayers*, you would soon fall into an Opinion, that it could not be *wrong to kneel at the Sacrament*, Prayer being, not only *before and after*, but *during the Time*, and *in the Act of Receiving*, the most proper Business and Exercise of the Mind you can be employed in. And therefore you act, I must needs say, very *consistently and wisely*, in thus making light, and extenuating the Propriety of kneeling in all public Prayer, if you are really determined not to own the Propriety, or to admit the Use of it, in the Lord's Supper.

As to the Propriety of kneeling in public Prayer, the worthy Person last mentioned seems to me in an odd Way of Thinking touching that Matter. Speaking of the Gestures proper for Prayer, and for each Sort and Occasion of it, *No Posture of the Body* (says he) *is unfit for short Ejaculations, and our Souls may go out towards God, while we lie on our Beds, sit at our Tables, or are taking our Rest, in any Method of Refreshment.*
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And when we say Grace after eating alone, there is no Necessity of rising always from our Seat; but the Custom of standing up is more Decent and Honourable, when we eat in Company. In Family Prayer, which is yet a more solemn Performance, he takes it for granted, that all kneel; and indeed all Dissenters who keep up Family Worship, so far as I am informed, do. All this, now, is perfectly right; here is a just Gradation in the outward Expressions of Adoration, proportioned to the Occasion, and to the less or greater Solemnity thereof. And who, now, would expect that public Prayer should be performed in a less honourable, a less reverend and devout Posture, than that of the Family? And yet so it is, I do assure you. For speaking of Public Prayer, the Worship of God in the great Congregation, he comes back again to standing, and thinks it not unfit for this Worship. However, he owns, the kneeling Posture, which he truly says, the Light of Nature itself, as well as the Rule of Scripture seems to dictate and lead us to, and has been, accordingly, practised in all Ages, and in all Nations, even where the Light of Scripture never shined, would certainly be a most agreeable Posture for the Worship of God in public Assemblies, if it might be had with Conveniency. Pray, mind it, Sir; it is but a, not the most agreeable Posture for public Worship, one, as it should seem of the most agreeable, but not the most agreeable of all. And, yet, one would think, it must be the most agreeable of all, if it be dictated by Nature,

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ture, inforced by Scripture, and recommended by
the Practice of all Ages and Nations, as it cer-
tainly is, and he confesses it to be.

It will not be denied, that standing is a Posture that may properly be used in Divine Worship, and sometimes in the very Act of Prayer. But, *of itself*, it is no worshipping Posture, and only the Motions, Actions, Gestures with which it is accompanied make it to be such. It will be also owned, there are many Instances in Scripture of the People of God, or of holy Men among them, *Standing* in Prayer; and to make such a Collection of them as some have, and as Mr. *Boyse*, in particular, has done, is to little purpose, unless it were farther shewn, that these were Instances of such *Simple, mere Standing*, as is commonly practised in your Congregations. When *Abraham stood before the Lord*, *Gen. xviii. 22.* to make his Prayer and Supplication to him, when the *Levites stood up*, *Neh. ix. 4.* in Prayer and Confession, and other *Jews* (as they often did, 'tis acknowledged) prayed *standing*, as the *Pharisee* and *Publican*, who went up to the Temple to pray, are represented to do, it is not to be thought, that they *only stood*, and used no bodily Expressions of Adoration. Nay, it is particularly remark'd concerning the *Publican*, that the outward Expressions of his Humility and Devotion were very Strong and Vehement. Or when the primitive Christians stood at Prayer, as every Body knows they did, on the Lord's Day, and at all Times between *Easter* and *Whitsuntide*, can we imagine they

they did not more than *barely keep upon their Feet*, in a steddly and composed Posture, or that they *studiously* and even *scrupulously* restrained from all such Gestures as were *naturally*, or by *generally received Use*, expressive of their Devotion? No, surely; that was not the Way of the Church of God, in those Ages. *Illuc suspicientes Christiani* ^a (says Tertullian) *Manibus expansis, quia innocuis, Capite nudo, quia non erubescimus, — oramus* — There was then, in their Religious Assemblies, not only a greater decency and composedness of Behaviour, but stronger outward Expressions and Demonstrations of the devout Affections of their Hearts, than are to be seen even in *our Churches*. Their Behaviour at Church was truly edifying. One may, indeed, be edified with seeing a Congregation standing at their Prayers, if, at the same time, one could see, *all over it*, such an outward Behaviour, as could be *properly* called *Worshipping*: But it would be to me little Edification (I must needs confess) to behold them, although with proper gravity and composedness of Countenance, *indolently* leaning upon their Pews, with perhaps, Hands *loosely* hanging down, Eyes, instead of elevated and lifted up to Heaven, either roving or else fix'd upon the Ground, or on the Face of the Minister, as you well know; the general manner (I speak it without Scorn) of your Congregations is: Inasmuch that I am confident, any Foreigner, who should be quite

^a Apolog. c. 30.

a Stranger to our Language, were he to enter *in time of Prayer*, would take it for *Sermon-time*, and little think those People were addressing themselves to God, but only listening to one who was addressing himself to *them*. And this, I think, evidently shews, that standing, considered simply in itself, is not an adoring Posture, and much less to be preferr'd to the more humble and honourable one I am contending for.

If this were not so, and those Gentlemen who take it upon them to justify the standing Posture at all times of publick Prayer, were not a little conscious thereof, what need had there been to make an excuse for *not kneeling*, to wit, *the want of Conveniency for it*? This want of Conveniency for kneeling is pleaded by ^aMr. *Boyse*; and the ^bgood *Doctor* pleads the same in the Passage above quoted, and in other Places takes care to put us in Mind of it. But what sort of *Conveniency* would they have? Have they not as good as our Lord had in the *Garden*, or *St. Paul* upon the *Sea Shore*? And if they want a *Conveniency* for Kneeling with *more ease*, they may accommodate themselves for a Trifle. Or do they want *room*? As to your Ministers, Sir, are *they* so thronged? Do the People intrude into their *Pulpits*, and not give them room to fall down upon their Knees,

^a Remarks on the Bishop of *Derry's* Discourse, concerning the Inventions of Men in the Worship of God, p. 174.

^b Guide to Prayer, p. 78.

no, not then, when they are pouring out their Souls before God, confessing their Sins, and the Sins of their People, and supplicating for Mercy, on the most solemn Occasions of Humiliation? And are *all* your Meetings so full, that you, Sir, of the Laity can but just stand upright by one another? Are you, one and all, so pent, as not to be able to bow a Knee unto the Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*? The whole Church, Sir, sees it is otherwise, and that not only you, but many others in every Congregation, it may be, of much less Consideration than yourself, are not *so* incommoded as this comes to, and have Conveniency enough for Kneeling, if you were minded to make use of it. And such as have *not*, may find it, alas, in *all*, or in *some or other* of our Churches. We have been often told, in excuse for your Separation, the Churches were so full, that you were forced to set up separate Assemblies, or great numbers must be without any publick Worship. But now, it seems, the Case is altered; the Meetings are fuller, and more crowded than the Churches. If so, it is high time, (in your *own* way of Reasoning) *to come back again*, and return to the Church whence you went. — Was there ever such an Excuse as this! I should *smile* to myself to see *some others*, but I am really concerned to find *such a Man* as Dr. *Watts* taking up with this pitiful pretence for a Practice, which is plainly maintained for other Reasons: And I can't forbear making upon it this melancholy Reflection, — *How great and prevailing is the Influence of Party-Attachments! And how mighty the Power of Prejudice, sometimes*

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times without being felt, even upon devout and
excellent Minds!

I hope, Sir, now, you will cease blaming me in your Thoughts, as I know you have been doing, for my Temerity, in thus disturbing the Writings of a Gentleman of so great Name, and established Reputation in the literary World. I am, it may be,

Impar congressus Achilli.

But, by this time, I hope you are satisfied, *he*, like that Hero, is vulnerable, *in one Part*, and that I have been fortunate enough to hit it. If he is ever *weak*, it is *there*, and *there*, I think, he is *always*, where he is arguing and settling Points between *you* and *us*. But as he stands, deservedly, so high in your Favour and Esteem, I will no longer tease you with his Slips and Oversights. And indeed, I fancy you are, ere this, pretty well tired with the tedious length of this Epistle, if not also with some other Properties thereof, even worse, and more *Insupportable*, than that. I will, therefore, here break off, and relieve your Patience, *for the Present*. But you may expect to hear once more, and that perhaps before it be long, from

Sir,

Your Humble Servant.

F I N I S.

The THIRD and LAST

LETTER

To a Gentleman Dissenting from the

CHURCH of *ENGLAND*,

WHEREIN

The Design of the Second (which was to refute the great and popular Objections of Dissenters against Communion with the Church of *England*, and to reflect them back upon themselves) is farther pursued, and completed.

To which is added

An APPENDIX,

Containing some CONSIDERATIONS on the Lawfulness, Expediency, and Necessity of requiring all who are to be admitted to the Ministry, or to any Ecclesiastical Preferment in the Church of *England*, or to be Preachers or Teachers in any Dissenting Congregation, to subscribe the Articles of Faith and Religion; and setting forth the Inconsistencies between the notorious *Practices* of Dissenters, and the avowed *Principles* of many of them touching that Matter.

By JOHN WHITE, B. D.

Sometime Fellow of St. *John's* College, *Cambridge*.

Nolo tale certamen adeas, in quo tantum te protegas, et, torpente dexterâ, sinistrâ clypeum circumferas. HIERON.

L O N D O N,

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The THIRD and LAST
L E T T E R
C O N C E R N I N G

The Popular Pleas of DISSENTERS.

S I R,

WHEN I was making an End of my former Letter to you, I let you know, you was to look for a *third* Address; and I am now sitting down, to acquit myself of my *Promise*, or *Menace*, shall I call it. For I can easily believe, I have already sufficiently exercised your Patience with my two former Letters, which were, indeed, extended to a Length I did not foresee at the Beginning of them, not imagining, then, I should have had so much to say to you, as, afterwards, when my Mind was a little warmed with thinking, I found I had. But, now, I will endeavour to be shorter, proportioning the Load I am imposing upon you, to that Measure of Patience, which I can hope you have *yet left* to bear it.

Doubtless, you remember, that, towards the Conclusion of my former Letter, I was vindicating the Practice of the Church of *England* in *kneeling* at the Lord's Table, and retorting the Charge of Imposition, which you bring against it, on that Account; from whence Occasion was taken for some Natural Reflections upon the general Practice of your Congregations, in the *avoidance* of *kneeling*, and always chusing to *stand* at your *Common-Prayer*. —

A

I now

I now directly proceed to another of our Impositions, as you are pleased to call them, to wit, *the Sign of the Cross* at Baptism, which you complain as grievously of, and as immeasurably decry, as the fore-mentioned; *First*, merely as a Ceremony, which the Church (you say) has no Authority to ordain; but more, *Secondly*, as a *Significant*, or (as your Writers almost always affect to speak, because, I suppose, it is a harder Word, and has a Termination which is ready to fright the common People) a *Symbolical* one, whereby, (it seems) it becomes a Sacrament of our own Institution: And by taking *thus* upon us to institute Sacraments, we invade, as 'tis pretended, the Prerogative of Christ, whose alone it is to ordain Sacraments in his Church. This, Sir, is the Charge; and being so heavy, it ought, surely, to be supported with the clearest Evidence; whereas, in my Opinion, it may be, with the clearest Evidence, refuted.

Here, let it be observed, as a Preliminary, that the Question is *not* about an inconvenient and cumbersome *Multitude* of Ceremonies, such as all the Offices of the Church of *Rome* are perfectly covered with, (for that, on all hands, is agreed to be justly offensive) but only about the Power of the Church to decree a Ceremony, or, if you please, two or three, supposing them always to be such as will become the Dignity and Majesty of God's Worship. And to shew you, it *has* such a Right, I will only ask this Question. The *holy Kifs*, as St. Paul calls it, or *the Kifs of Charity*, as it is called by St. Peter, used in the Primitive Apostolic Church, in the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, was *that* a Rite of *Divine Appointment*, or was it not? If you say, of *Divine Appointment*, I desire to know, by what Authority *you* and *we* both have laid it aside. If we have Authority to lay aside a Ceremony of *Di-*
vine

vine Appointment and Ordination, we have, certainly, Authority (for that, surely, is the less) to *ordain* one of our *own*. But if you shall say (which, probably, is the Truth of the Case) *not* of Divine Appointment, but only ordained by the Apostles, without any Precept from the Lord, or any particular Direction from the Holy Spirit, a merely Ecclesiastical, prudential Institution, is not this saying, it was ordained by the Church? And since the Church, as a Church, or not considered under the immediate, and extraordinary Guidance of the Holy Spirit, has the same Power and Authority in all Ages, the Apostolic no greater than the Present, I can't see, why it should be thought a more unwarrantable Thing, in the *present* Church, to join the Use of *the Sign of the Cross* in the Administration of *one* Sacrament, than it was, in the *Apostolic*, to ordain the *Kiss of Charity*, in the Celebration of the *other*.

The Rite or Ceremony just now mentioned, as ordained by the Apostles, and some other Rites which we find mention of in the sacred Writings, as used in the Assemblies of the first Christians, were all, plainly, significant: And such were always the most approved of in the Primitive Church, as they are, now, in the reformed Churches. The *French* Church, in particular, approved of significant Ceremonies; and *Calvin* appears, in divers Parts of his Writings, to be entirely in the same Sentiments. He, indeed, is so far from making the Significancy of a Ceremony any just Prejudice against, or Objection to it, that he rather requires it, as a necessary Condition of its being Lawfully appointed. The Church of *Rome*, in the abundance of its Ceremonies, has some that are really significant, and some that are *not*. Which of these, think you, Sir, are the most exceptionable or defensible? Whether (for instance)

the Priest's *smiting his Breast*, when he says, in the Confession of his Sin, *mea culpa*, the Significancy of which is plain and solemn, or his *keeping his fore Fingers close to his Thumbs*, untill he has washed them, and his *starting*, as if he was suddenly waked out of Sleep, when, after some secret Orations, he cries out aloud, *in omnia Sæcula Sæculorum*. Ceremonies these, without any Significancy at all, at least, any that is obvious, and which a Man, after guessing a thousand Times, and without the Help of their *Ritualists* or *Rationalists* (as, belike, they are called) would never be able to find out, and really are good for nothing, but to dazzle the Eyes, and perplex the Minds of the Worshippers. In my Way of thinking, an *insignificant* Ceremony differs little or nothing from an *impertinent* one ; but when it has a real Significancy and Meaning, and that Meaning is not only *Natural* and *Obvious*, but also *Important* enough to find a Place in the Office wherein it is used, and *pertinently* inculcated therein, it then becomes *Instructive*, serving to put us in Mind of Studying to attain some Grace, or to practice some Christian Duty. True, say you ; this is the very Thing that we dislike the Sign of the Cross for, as it makes it a human Sacrament. But I beg your Pardon, Sir, for that, unless you can shew, that we use it, not only as a *Remembrance* or *Hint*, or a *Declarative Sign*, to others, of that Grace of Christian Fortitude, in openly Professing the Faith of Christ crucified, which all Christians are obliged to, but as a *Means* also whereby that Grace is conveyed, by the Spirit of God, into the Soul, or as a *Pledge* and *Earnest* to assure us, that it shall be, the Sign being duly received, conveyed into it.

Nor are these Arguments of yours against the Sign of the Cross, and all other Ceremonies, more easily

easily *refuted* than *retorted*. You are not, methinks, very consistent with yourselves, in condemning *so much* and raising *such* Opposition to *this* Ceremony, while nothing is said against some *others*. I have sometimes wondered, how the Ceremony of casting Earth upon the Body in the Burial of the Dead has escaped your Censure. There is no such Thing as a Ceremony in our Church, or in any Church whatever, if *that* is not one, and a Symbolical one too : Yet I dont remember ever to have met with any Objection to it, in any one of your Writers. And as to your People, they are, generally, (I'm persuaded) so far from being *displeased*, that they are rather *pleased* with it. And this, I think, I have plainly observed of many of them, when at the Burial of their Dead, where the throwing of *Earth to Earth, Ashes to Ashes, Dust to Dust* has appeared to me to move and affect them in a sensible Manner, and to have ministred to them a pleasing Occasion for Reflections upon our Mortality. Then, there are the Ceremonies in Marriage. I shall not need to name, or count them up to you. 'Tis very well known, what they are, and that there are more in this Office than in any other : Yet, neither do your Writers, now a-days, complain of them, nor any of your People, as far as I hear, stumble at them ; and whether they do, in their Judgments, approve of them, or whether they do *not*, yet, being determined to go through with them, they seem to think it advisable (as it is, to be sure, the wisest Part) not to say a Syllable against them. Perhaps, you will say, you submit to them as *Civil* Ceremonies ; and indeed, I am inclined to think, that you do now, comply, generally, with them, as such. And this Reason of your so ready compliance with them ^a Mr. *Peirce*

^a *Vindic. of Dissenters*, Part III. c. 9.

gives us. *The Rites and Ceremonies of Marriage* (says he) *we judge, are purely Civil; and so, 'tis the Magistrate's Part to appoint them. — Let the Magistrate prescribe whatever civil and decent Rites he will, to testify and declare the Marriage, Subjects are bound to comply with them.* The Magistrate prescribe! For God's Sake, Sir, how does the Magistrate, *here, prescribe* the Rites and Ceremonies of Marriage, more than the other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church? He no otherwise prescribes them, than as the *Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England* are authorized by Act of Parliament; in which way, *all the Ceremonies of the Church of England are prescribed* by him. And if that will make those of the one Sort to be *civil* Rites, and to be, therefore, complied with, why should it not make the other to be such? I wish the Hearts of these Gentlemen would serve them to be as willing to comply with the other Rites, Ceremonies, and Constitutions of the Church, upon just and true Principles, as they are willing and ingenious to frame to themselves erroneous ones, to reconcile their Minds to *these*, which they find it convenient to submit to. The older Non-conformists had other, and, in my Opinion, truer Conceptions of these Matters, considering them as Rites and Ceremonies *Ecclesiastical*, and constantly opposing them, as such. And had we gone about to bear them in hand, they were only *Civil*, and prescribed by the Magistrate; which for that Reason no one need scruple, I dare say, we should have been long enough before we could have brought *them* into those Sentiments. “What!
 “*civil Ceremonies* (they would doubtless have said)
 “in the Church of God, in the Midst of the Ad-
 “ministration of a Divine Institution and Holy
 “Ordinance,

“ Ordinance, intermixt with Pastoral Exhortations,
 “ Holy Prayers, and Solemn Benedictions, strongly
 “ significant and expressive of some Religious
 “ Truths or Duties, which the contracting Parties
 “ are then recognizing, or binding themselves to,
 “ and appointed, because so expressive of those
 “ Truths or Duties.” I’ll venture to say, these
 Things would have appeared to *them*, as I own they
 do to me, somewhat incomprehensible.

If you are thus inconsistent with yourselves in
 condemning *some* of our Ceremonies, while you
 have nothing to say against, and quietly submit to
others, you are still more inconsistent, in condemn-
 ing them, when, at the same Time, you have divers
 Ceremonies of your own. For such you really have,
 tho’ you seem not to know it. I will point them
 out, therefore, to your Observation. — Few of
 you, I suppose, at this Time of Day, have any
 Scruples about uncovering your Heads, whenever
 you enter either our Churches, or your own Meet-
 ings. But is not this a Ceremony? I am sure ^b *Cal-*
vin considered it as such. And, indeed, *bowing* the
 Head at the Name of Jesus is not more a Cere-
 mony, than *uncovering* it, at entering the Place of
 Divine Worship, nor, to my Apprehension, more
 exceptionable. And have you no Ceremonies in
 Ordination? Such of your Ministers as do receive Or-
 dination by Imposition of Hands, do, I presume, re-
 ceive it *kneeling*, (at least, I have heard of some that
 have) to signify and express that Humility, Subjection,
 and Lowliness of Heart, with which they receive the
 Gift of the Presbyterate, then about to be confer’d
 upon them, the Ordainer, as in the *French* Church,
 laying his Hands on, *standing*. And if this be done,
 as in that Church it is *professed* to be done, to signify,
 that he acts herein in the Name and by the Authority

^b Instit. Lib. 4. c. 10. Sect. 29.

8 *The third Letter concerning the*

of God, here are two Ceremonies, and both as significant (since that is the great Fault) as the Sign of the Cross, or any other in our Church. — Again; in the Covenant between you and your Pastors to walk together in Christian Ordinances, I also suspect there are some Ceremonies; but as the Way and Manner of striking this Covenant is pretty much of a Secret, at least to *us*, I can only put it to *you*, who may have, perhaps, entered into it, yourself, or, at least, have heard the Ceremonies thereof related by others, whether there *are*, or are *not*. This I am certain of, there was once a *League and Covenant*, with very solemn Ceremonies, as *lifting up the Hands to Heaven*, which your Fathers came *heartily* into. And they were made so solemn, that they might be the more affecting, and a stronger Tie upon the Conscience. A plain Confession, by the way, that, in the Acts of Religion, proper Ceremonies are useful to *stir up the dull Mind of Man*, and make lasting Impressions upon it.

Whenever, in any Act of Divine Worship, one particular Gesture is constantly and religiously observed, and never allowed to be departed from, and, especially, whenever it is observed by Reason of some peculiar Significancy therein, that Gesture, whatever it be, can't be denied to be a Ceremony. By this Rule, you will be found to have one Ceremony, at least, in the Administration of the Lord's Supper. I will not insist upon what was ^c *taught at London, and, in part, practised at Amsterdam*, by some Independents, at the Time of their first appearing, viz. *That it was requisite for Communicants to participate in the Lord's Supper with their Hats on. as a Rite significant of their Table-honour, and Fellowship with Christ, but that the Minister should be uncovered, in Sign of his Service to the*

^c See Baylie's *Diffuasive* from the Errors, &c. p. 122

Communicants, as the Lord's much honoured Children sitting covered when they ate of their Father's Meat, but will confine myself to the Manner and Posture wherein you, now, receive. We all know, this is sitting. This you observe constantly, regularly, and universally, as we do kneeling, and you do so, for the Sake of a great Significancy that is in it. According to Calderwood, this Significancy is, our Rest, and the entire Accomplishment of all the legal Ceremonies in our Lord Christ; tho', with what Propriety that Truth should be signified and inculcated in this Sacrament, rather than in that of Baptism, or indeed, in any other Office of the Church, I know not. According to ^d Mr. Cotton, and his New-English Independents, our Lord made Symbolical Use of it, to teach the Church their Majority over their Ministers in some Cases, and their judicial Authority as Co-seffors with him, at the last Judgment: But these, I imagine, will hardly be allowed to be by your present Ministers, the true Reasons and Significancies of this Ceremony; but their Notion seems to be, that it is in token of our Fellowship with Christ, and the great Privilege and Honour we have of Communion with him^e. It is (says Mr. Boyse) most fit to signify our partaking of the precious Virtue and Fruits of the Sacrifice of Christ, and the Honour the blessed God puts upon us, when he admits us to sit down, as Guests, at his holy Table, in Token of our being received into a State of Amity and Peace with him. And by this Significancy (quoth he) that Posture seems recommended to us, as most agreeable to the Nature of the Institution. By this we may see, that, if our Church has the Sign of the Cross, your Churches have also their Ceremonies, and those too, no less significant than this;

^d Way of the Churches in New-England, p. 68.

^e Remarks on the Bishop of Derry's Discourse, p. 117.

and that, when it serves their Turn, the Significancy of a Ceremony shall be made its great Commendation, and that, far from a ground of its Unlawfulness, or a Reason for laying it aside, it shall be esteemed a very good Reason for observing it.

But, in the Sacrament of Baptism itself, you have a Ceremony, and a Symbolical one too, I mean, giving the Christian Name to the baptized Party.—Now, I see you smile, as if you thought I was going about to be *nugatory*, or *merry*. But I desire you to forbear two or three Moments, and then if you see Cause, smile on. For my Part, I would not be thought other than very serious in this Argument, which I take to be solid, and to come up to the Point I use it for ^f. Your Children, Sir, as well as ours, it is well known, have their Names given them in Baptism: These are called the Christian Names, to put them in perpetual Remembrance of their holy Profession. And Names are chosen, often by *us*, and by *you* oftener, such as signify some Privilege, or Blessing, some excellent Grace, or Duty of the Gospel. You will easily recollect the Names I mean, *Faith*, *Constancy*, *Patience*, *Charity*, *Praise God*, *Accepted*, and many more of the like Sort. Tell me, then, Sir, is not the giving the Christian Name, and such, especially, as the forementioned, an *Addition* to the Sacrament? Is it not, too, an *Imposition*? Is it not a *Ceremony*? Would not you call the giving a Name to Bells in their Consecration, according to the Order of the Church of *Rome*, a *vile Popish Ceremony*? And is not this, then, to be called, tho' not a *vile*, yet a *real Ceremony* as well? And is not this Ceremony *Significant*, or, if you please, *Symbolical*? And is it not a Sacrament, an *outward*

^f See the Case of the Cross in Baptism among the *London Cases*, p. 31.

Sign of an inward and spiritual Grace? As much a Sacrament, Sir, as much an *outward Sign of an inward and spiritual Grace*, as the *Cross* can be pretended to be. If there be any Difference, it should rather seem to be *more* so, because that is given, with *us*, and, I suppose also, with *you*, in the very *Act* of Baptising, while the other is made *after it is over*. And if a Man of a working and distinguishing Head, such as that of old Mr. *Baxter*, were not to think his Time ill employed, and could in his Conscience *dispense* with himself in writing and publishing a Book, to shew, that this is a *human Sacrament* added to that of Christ's Institution, and a *most Sacrilegious Usurpation of his Prerogative*, he might be able to amuse the World, puzzle the Cause, perplex and confound weak Heads, convince those who *wanted* to be convinced of it, and, in the whole, discourse upon this Argument with as much *Plausibility*, as any of your Writers have yet done, upon the other.

The Want of a godly Discipline in the Church is also objected, and held a sufficient Reason for separating from it. But if the Want of it was really as great as is pretended, Separation, on that Account, would not be justifiable. And for this I could quote you the holy Scriptures, the Sense and Practice of Antiquity, of foreign Protestant Divines, and their Churches, nay, of the ^s graver and soberer Sort of Puritans and Non-conformists, all positively determining against the Lawfulness of dividing from any Church, for some Imperfections,, or some A-

^s The Opinions of *Cartwright*, *Dr. Thomas Goodwin*, *Blake*, *Vines*, and others, even of *Dr. Owen*, and *Mr. Baxter*, that Discipline not being simply necessary to the being of a Church, it is not Lawful to separate therefrom for the Want, or for some Irregularities in the Administration of it, may be seen collected in *The Case of Lay-Communion with the Church of England considered among the London Cases*.

buses and Irregularities in its Discipline, or even a total Want of it. But this Way of answering the Objection I shall at present wave, and take another, which seems better to fall in with the Measures I have been pursuing from the Beginning; and that is, representing the real State of our Discipline, from whence it may, probably, appear, there is not, in our Church, *so great* a Want of it, as you seem, at present, to imagine, and then shewing that what Want of it there is (and I shall not deny but *that* is too great) it is owing to *you*, in a good Measure, and that *you* really want it as much, *yourselves*. As these Heads contain in them many particulars, some Enlargement upon them will be necessary. And indeed, I am the more willing to go somewhat deeper into them, because from a Word or two I remember you dropt about Discipline, *the Want and the Disorders of it*, I suspect that Matter sticks not a little with you.

I agree with you, Sir, that the Discipline of the Church is of great Moment towards the Edification of its Members, and that the Fault is unpardonable, when Church Governors let it fall, through a supine Carelessness and Neglect. It is a spiritual Sword put into their Hands, and it will be expected that they bear it not in vain, nor let it rust, and lie by useless, when Heresy or Immorality call for it. The Neglect of Discipline upon Hereticks was the great Crime of some of the Angels of the seven Churches of *Asia*, for which they stand reproved by the holy Spirit — *Thou sufferest that Woman Jezebel which calleth herself a Prophetess, to teach and to seduce my Servants. — Thou hast there them that hold the Doctrine of Balaam — So hast thou also them that hold the Doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which Thing I hate. — Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with*

with the Sword of my Mouth. These Reprehensions and Threatnings are severe : Yet it may be hoped, they will not light upon all to whom the Government of Churches is committed, even where there is a great Prostration of its Discipline. For that may be owing to Causes which it is not in *their* Power to remove. The higher Powers may cramp them in the Exercise of it : And where they are more at Liberty, the Circumstances of the Times may be such as will make it, upon the whole of the Matter, more prudent, and more for the Interest of Christianity, to slacken the Reins a little. When the Distempers of the Times are evidently too strong for the Discipline of the Church to contend with, it may be a wise Part in the Governors thereof (at least if the Cause of Religion and Virtue is not immediately concerned) not to *enrage* them more by a too *warm*, or discover their own Weakness by an *insignificant* and *unavailing* Opposition. 'Tis a Censure which *Cicero* passes upon one of the *Cato's*, that by his unseasonable and undistinguishing Rigours, he sometimes hurt the Common-wealth. *Nocet interdum Reipublicæ, dicit enim tanquam in Platonis πολιτείᾳ, non tanquam in facie Romuli sententiam.* And when the Decay of the antient Discipline was complained of to the *Roman* Senate, and a Motion made to revive it, *Tiberius* writ to them against it, telling them, *it was dangerous to strive against such general and prevailing Evils, and to go about imposing, with a high hand, those Severities and Restraints, which the People had been so long unaccustomed to.* And if this related to Matters not absolutely necessary, it was a right Observation. An Age of great and general Corruption seems, indeed, to call more loudly for the Restraints of Church Discipline ; but then it will not *bear* them : Especially, if there appears,

at the same time, in almost all Orders and Ranks of Men, an unaccountable dislike of all Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, if both the Tongues and the Pens of Men are let loose against it, and it be grown *Modish* to rail at it. Those who sit at the Helm, when such a Storm rises, and beats hard upon them, will find it, probably, their Prudence, not to bear up against it too much, but give way to its Impetuosity, and ride it out as well as they can, in hopes it will abate, before long, and some unforeseen Cause will make it subside and settle, and *still the Madness of the People*. And yet in the worst State of things, something may be done towards the Recovery of a more perfect Discipline. *Deus omnia paulatim*. Sudden and violent Changes or Reformations in all *Political Bodies*, *Civil*, or *Ecclesiastical*, as well as *Human* ones, may be dangerous; but Things may be brought about, by insensible Degrees, to the State one desires, and Discipline restored, in a good Measure, by little and little, unheeded in a manner, and without causing any great shakings of the Constitution. And may I presume to say, that Church-Governors will be obliged to lay hold of every favourable Juncture, and watch all Opportunities to do their Duties, and not make *the badness of the Times* a Pretence for their Neglect, when, perhaps, *Indolence*, *Pusillanimity*, or *Worldly-Wisdom* are at the Bottom of it.

I will not now, Sir, dissemble the Matter: I have been setting forth the Case of the Church of *England*, and making such Apology as I could for it. There is a Want of Discipline in it, and that is owing in a good Measure to the Causes before mentioned. Whoever looks into our *Rubricks*, *Canons*, and *Constitutions* will find, delineated *there*, a most excellent Scheme of *Ecclesiastical Discipline*. Yet, let it be owned, that, as it appears in Use and Practice,

Practice, it does by no means correspond with that Idea the Laws of the Church give us of it ; tho' it be, yet, far from fallen into that *deplorable Dissolution*, and *total Disuse*, which your Writers, Sir, would fain make the World believe it is. If *they* are to be believed, every Thing is amiss, every Thing out of order among us. ^h Mr. *Peirce* observes, we ourselves lament, once a Year, every *Asb-Wednesday*, the Want of Discipline, and express our Wishes for the Revival of it : Tho' he fears these Wishes are but faint ; and *tho' the pious Part of the Clergy earnestly desire it, and, perhaps, carefully endeavour it, yet the greater Part desire it not, but rather hinder all such Designs*. He insinuates his Fears, *that the troublesome divided Circumstances we are now in, are the Punishment of our Sin, in neglecting and destroying Church-Discipline, and that God is hereby calling us to restore it* ; but, however, intimates his Hopes, too, *that our merciful Father will please, by his holy Spirit to stir us up to amend it*. They long, he says, *to see that Day, and prays heartily to God that he would hasten it*. It looks mighty good, and extremely obliging, to use Expressions of such Commiseration towards us, and to pray so devoutly on our Behalf. Only, I have some Fear, all his *Charity* will be *mistaken*, and his Prayers for the Church no otherwise considered, than those of Mr. *Whitfield* for his Opposers are used to be, to wit, as *rhetorical Aggravations*, and *artful Heightnings* of the Reproach, to make the wretched Condition of our Discipline appear in the stronger Light. We will, then, see what is the true State of our Discipline, and whether, Sir, your Friends, in Consideration of the Strictness of their own, have any Right to reproach *us* for the Want of it.

Will you be pleased, Sir, to look into it again,

^h *Vindicat of Dissenters*, Part III. ch. 16.

and carefully consider the *Commination*. You will find nothing *there* either *expressing* or *implying* a Want of *all* Discipline. What we there say is *much to be wished* is only this, the *Restoration of that godly Discipline there was in the Primitive Church, that at the Beginning of Lent, such Persons as stood convicted of notorious Sin were put to open Penance*. That is to say, we wish it was a practicable Thing, to bring at the Beginning of *Lent*, all scandalous and notorious Sinners before the Church, and then cast them, continuing impenitent, out of it. The Revival of this Piece of Discipline (which is but one out of a great many) is the whole Matter of our Wish *there*. And as the Church in this Office, so some of the Bishops, in their Sermons, at the very Beginning of the Reformation, complained of the same Thing. Good old *Latimer* complained of it from the Pulpit, before King *Edward VI.* and earnestly moved his *Grace, that there might be restored to the Church the Discipline of Christ against notable Offenders*. But nothing was done in the Matter. This probably, was owing, partly to the Difficulty of introducing the antient Discipline, and partly to the little Thought that was taken about it: To bring Men back from the *Popish* to the *Primitive* Discipline, at the Beginning of *Lent*, that is, from only whispering their Sins (in Company with the best of their Neighbours, which quite takes off the Shame of the Matter) in the Ear of a Priest, and receiving from him an Absolution, with some kind of Penance, one, perhaps, of their own chusing, which might be performed by themselves, or by another; to bring them, (I say) from *this* to *open and publick Admonitions*, to a *Confession of their Sins* before the whole Church, with Declarations of their *unfeigned Repentance*, may be conceived no easy Thing to be done, tho' it had been zealously attempted.

tempted. But indeed it was not; not so, as it *might* and *ought* to have been, tho', indeed, more *here*, than in most *other* Churches of the Reformation. The Thoughts and Pens of all learned Protestants, for many Years, were wholly employed about Doctrinal Matters, exposing the Errors and Corruptions, and taking the People off from the idolatrous, and superstitious Practices of Popery; and there was little Care, especially abroad, about Discipline and Order. *Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius*, and other Heads of the Reformation writ and preach'd a great deal against the Church of *Rome*, but did little else. *They did*, as Dr. *Maurice* very justly observes, *the Work of Evangelists, rather than of Governors of Churches*: and Ecclesiastical Polity was so long neglected, that infinite Disorders grew up in them, and threatned them with Ruin. And when they began to set up such a Discipline as they could, in many Places, it was difficultly admitted, and, in some, not admitted at all, but all Coercion was left to the civil Magistrate. Matters were not in so bad a State here in *England*: For here, the Episcopal Authority, by the good Providence of God, being preserved, a Form of Discipline was also preserved, and kept up, from the Beginning, tho' not always, 'tis true, administred in so perfect a Manner, as might be wished. And our Ecclesiastical Factions and Discontents, *first*, *then*, the Rebellion and Usurpation ensuing, *afterwards*, a general Looseness and Dissoluteness of Manners, and, *last of all*, a Looseness of Principles, as was too natural, ensuing, made it impossible to be carried to any Degrees of Primitive Perfection. It may be thought there have been some favourable Opportunities to mend it, if they had happily been seized, and all concerned had been hearty. If there have, they are *slipt*, and cannot be *now* re-

called. At least, the Temper and Habit of the present Times is too evidently such, that it would be extreme Folly to think of doing a great deal, and the Height of Rashness to undertake to revive, especially all at once, all the Rigours of antient Discipline, as you, it should seem, would have us do. Would you have Church-Governours always act like natural inanimate Bodies, never to suspend their Powers, but be continually exerting the utmost Possibility of their Force? Would you have them deal out their Censures at all Hazards, *drive on*, without minding Consequences, tho' the World should be turned up-side down, or *set in a Flame* by it? Certainly, Prudence, which is an Ability to judge, from the Consideration of Times, Places, Things, and Persons, what, upon all Occasions, is best and fittest to be done, and how done in the best Manner, ought to prevail *in all Things*, and in nothing more, than in Matters of Discipline and Government. And as you are endowed with an eminent Share of it, you will be, I dare say, of Opinion (I mean, if you will but reflect, and suffer yourself to be carried away with popular Noise and Prejudice) that an exact Discipline is impossible to be set up, and would do more harm than good, if it were, *now*, to be set up amongst us.

The *Church of Scotland* (as ⁱ Mr. *Peirce*, at least, tells us) *is famed for curbing and restraining Impiety, which elsewhere rages without Controul*, and has been sometimes proposed, as a Pattern of exact Discipline for *us* to follow. I shall not, at present, inquire whether this Character be true. But supposing it to be so, there is so great a Difference in the external State of the two Churches, that *neither* should be proposed, as a proper Pattern for the *other*. They in *Scotland* are so much *loved*, or so much

ⁱ Dedication of his Vindication of the Dissenters.

feared,

feared, or, however it comes about, are so *happy*, as to have the *Assemblies of their Clergy* always sitting, who can immediately apply Remedies to any growing Evil or Abuse, and keep it from being fixt. They have not been, yet, inebriated with those Notions of *Christian Liberty*, *Liberty boundless and uncontrouled*, which have been diffeminated among us, in Pamphlets, and Weekly Papers, and (poor Men!) are yet ignorant of, notwithstanding the great Pains their Brethren *here* have taken to shew them, their Right to do in Religion whatever they list. The general Poverty of the People keeps them more humble, and their Want of the Materials for Luxury (the Source of all our Corruptions here in *England*) with their living at such a Distance from the great Seat of it, keeps them more virtuous and innocent. Then, the Power of their Clergy, which is there suffered, I know not how, to be skrewed up into a kind of Independency, makes them more revered by the People, and gives them a greater Influence and Authority over them. *All together* dispose them cheerfully to receive the Yoke of Discipline, to submit to Rules and Orders, to any Restraints, or even Censures that are thought fit to be laid upon them : While, with us, the most *gentle* Restraint, tho' it be, too, ever so *necessary*, shall be exclaimed against, as an insupportable Piece of Ecclesiastic Pride and Tyranny ; every Animadversion upon the Crimes of Men of any tolerable Condition and Way of living in the World, an insolent Triumph over their Quality, which they resolve to revenge, some way or other, upon the Church. Considering these Distempers and ill Humours of the Times, and how much also Vice and Wickedness abound, insomuch that, if all were treated as, by the Rules of the antient Discipline, they were to be, we must interdict from Christian Privileges al-

most half the Kingdom, considering, I say, these Things, a little *Temper and Moderation*, or (if you will call it so) a little *Slackness* in the Government of the Church, should not, surely, be esteemed so great, and so unpardonable a Fault.

It was thought by most the great Mistake of that Man of *downright unpolished Integrity*, Archbishop *Laud*, that in his Endeavours to restore Discipline, he did not enough consider the Tempers and Conditions of the People he had to deal with, and what the Times would bear; but, as the noble Historian informs us, *If the Faults and Vices were fit to be look'd into, let the Persons be who they would that were guilty of them, they were sure to find no Connivance, but to be prosecuted to their Shame and Punishment.* You know, Sir, the Sectaries *then* did not like *this*; nay, they pursued him to Death, in a good Measure, on the Account of it. And do you imagine your Party would really like it *now*? Or that in Case the Church were to pursue the same Measures, they would applaud her for it, and support her in it? Indeed, you are mistaken, if you think so. There is rather Reason to believe these heavy Complaints of our Want of Discipline are made, to goad and stimulate my Lords the Bishops to do as that illustrious Archbishop did, with no good Intention towards us. They plainly see the Indisposition of the Times for it, and that any high Acts of Church Power would certainly sharpen Men's Humours, *raise* in some, and *increase* in others, a Disinclination to the Church; and then, who can tell but what *has been* may be, and what may, at last, turn up, to their Advantage? But to say the Truth, I rather believe they do it, not so much out of Policy, and with a deep Design of drawing us into this Snare, as out of stark Love of finding Fault with the Church, and to increase the Number

ber of *plain Reasons* for their Dissent from it.

They are not, methinks, very wise, I mean wise for themselves, and their own Safety, when they call *so* upon us to revive and restore the antient Discipline. For, by the Rules of *that*, open Schismatics were treated almost as roughly as any Sort of Offenders whatsoever; and this I leave to their serious Consideration. 'Tis more to my present Purpose to observe, that it is not fair (as once Calvin complained was *his* Case) *Dissipationem, cujus ipsi causa sunt, probri loco nobis obiectare*, to throw in our Teeth that Dissolution of Church Discipline which they themselves are the Causes of. If that be owing to *them* chiefly, it would, surely, be right to hold their Tongues, and say not a Word about it. Indeed Mr. Peirce says, *It is not long of us that they cannot govern their own Members*. Yes, but it is *long* of *them*, in a great Measure. For have not they joined their Endeavours with Latitudinarians and Free-Thinkers to cry down the Power of the Church? Have not they openly taught, it has no Power but what is merely persuasive, which, properly speaking, is none at all. And does not this Position tear up from beneath our Feet the very Ground and Foundation of all Government and Discipline? *No Authority, no Discipline*, one would think might pass for a plain and incontestable Aphorism; and if the common People are taught the Former, they are not such stark Fools, and so void of all natural Logic, but they can, themselves, infer the Latter. The Consequence is so plain, so easy, so just, and natural, that they may be trusted with drawing it for themselves. I can hardly think with what Face any Person who occupies the Place of a Church Governor, after having maintained, in the Face of the World, that the Church has *no Authority at all*, can go about to do any *Act*
of

of Discipline ; or if he has the Assurance (for I really *do* think it requires some Assurance) to do *that*, how he can expect due Submission from those that are subject to him, or how complain, if he finds them unruly, and disobedient, and not disposed to regard him, in any Thing. For such Behaviour is but the *practical Part* of his own Doctrine. And it is too evident, the present Contempt of all spiritual Authority in *most of all* Ranks of Men is, in a good Measure, the baneful Fruit of such Doctrines as these, in propagating which every Body knows your Ministers, Sir, have had no inconsiderable Share.

But they have ruined Discipline another Way, by the Divisions they have made among us. In such a distracted State of Things as they have thrown us into, an exact Discipline can't be expected to be preserved. For who will value the Censures of the Church, or who will Care for being thrown out of it, while they may be received in other Christian Societies, with open Arms. It is the commonest Thing in the World to hear People openly threaten, *they will go to the Meeting*, if they are not indulged in all their unreasonable Demands, and disorderly Ways, by which Means they often get to be indulged in them. Mr. *Peirce* says, *We are afraid to reject Hereticks, and other notorious Sinners, from our Communion, lest they go over to them.* No, we are not afraid to reject *such* from our Communion, for *that* or for *any* Reason ; but, perhaps, we may think it both a *prudent* and *charitable* Part rather to overlook some Things that are not very gross, which yet might deserve some Animadversion, than the People should leave the Church, and become Schismatics, and so involve themselves in a Sin of a much deeper Dye than their other Offences were. To allay our Fears of losing Hereticks, and other scandalous

dalous Sinners, from our Communion, he assures us, *those Fears are causeless, for they should admit no such to their Communion, unless they mend their Manners.* What does the Gentleman say? No Hereticks, no *Arians*, for instance, in your Communion! No scandalous Sinners, no *Fornicators, Adulterers, Drunkards, Revilers or Extortioners* received into *your Churches*! I must beg your Pardon, if I am not satisfied of *this*, and *demur* upon it. For I could never perceive the Doors of the Meeting were ever shut against any, but that all Comers were welcome. And if such profligate Persons be not admitted to *sit at the Lord's Table* (which, in all likelihood, they will not desire to do) they need not fear being admitted to all the other Parts of your Worship.

But what if, Sir, after all, it appears, there is as great a Want of Discipline in *your Churches*, as in the Church of *England*? it may be reasonably supposed, the Doctrine beforementioned must have upon the Members of *your Churches*, as well as of *ours*, some Influence to make themselves less tractable and obsequious to your Discipline, than they might otherwise have been. And why, too, may it not be supposed, *you* are as much afraid to censure *your People*, as *we ours*, for fear they come over to the Church? I am sure, *you* have, I should have said *your Ministers* have, generally, one Reason to be *more* afraid of censuring, or *any way* disobliging them, as they depend *more* upon their Number, and Benevolence. This reasoning, I own, is of no Weight, if the Fact be found otherwise, as, indeed, Mr. *Peirce*, in the Book before quoted, says it is. And to shew it is, he has given us as hideous a Representation of our Discipline as he well could. But ought he not then to have given us *some* Representation of *your own*, that it might have been seen, upon a Comparison, *which* was preferable. But
not

not a tittle of that, I assure you. Indeed, he does say, (and saying is all, which is very easy) you have *a deal of Discipline*. For he asks, *Why don't they use as much Discipline, as they see we do? Why don't they as well as we, keep Hereticks, and profligate Sinners from their Communion?* As they see we do? For my Part, I *see* it no more than your People, Sir, I believe, *feel* it. He must be *second-sighted* who can *see* any such Thing. Where is it, Sir, to be *seen*? Not, I am sure, in Use and Practice. Have you, then, any Book of Discipline? Where is that to be *seen*? No, indeed, you seem to do all without Book, as if you thought any Scheme or pre-composed Form of Church Discipline as bad a Thing as a Form of Prayer. An exact Account of your Discipline, we should be mighty glad to *see*. We have long wish'd for it, but I fear we are yet like to go without it. It will hardly be thought advisable to expose all your Church-Dealings to publick Canvassing and Examination. Yet, as he has mention'd your keeping *Hereticks* and *profligate Sinners* from your Communion, and piqued himself so much upon those Accounts, a few Thoughts shall be bestowed on each.

It must be owned, you have a short and easy Way to come at heretical Ministers, and eject them. Let but the People withdraw his Pay, and the Thing is done at once. I mean, Sir, if the People continue, themselves, in orthodox Sentiments, for otherwise, it can't be expected they should dismiss him, and the Heretick is fixt immoveably in his Post. Or if you think it more *Decent* and *Ecclesiastical* to have it done by the Interposition of neighbouring Ministers, it may be done, without much Difficulty, *that* Way. For the Heretick, when he appears before them, cannot intrench himself behind *Forms of Law*, nor take Advantage of the
dilatatory

dilatory Proceedings of all legal Courts: But, as your Churches have not bounded themselves by any Rules which may not be departed from, they may proceed against him in a summary and arbitrary Way; and there is none to whom he may appeal against their Sentence and Determination. This, we'll say, is an Advantage you have for getting rid of Hereticks, in a quick and easy Way. But what doth it signify, if no body can tell who are Hereticks? You know, who it was, (one of your selves) who openly asserted such a Notion of Heresy, as makes it impossible for any, besides God and themselves, to know, who *are* Hereticks; and who can doubt, but it was with Intent to screen and protect them from all Censure. This, at least, must unavoidably be the Consequence and Effect. For if his Notion of Heresy be *right*, there is no doubt, but it would be *wrong* to call any Man Heretick, and much more to prosecute and censure him, as such, unless God, the Searcher of Hearts, should reveal, or himself confess, that he maintains his Opinions against his Judgment, and under the Condemnation of his own Mind. And if he confesses *that*, it will not be much Harm *he* can do; and it would be pity he should be pursued, or any way molested, as a *Heretick*, but begging him for a *Fool* would be the most reasonable Treatment of him.

Before this Notion of Heresy was so publickly defended, you *did*, indeed, fall pretty foul upon a few whom you esteemed Hereticks: You turned them out of their Pastoral Employments; and so far, I readily own, you acted laudably. But I have not heard you went any farther, or that you *turn'd them out of your Communion*, as Mr. Peirce would have us believe you *always* do. And if you did suffer them to *continue still* in your *Communion*, you have not so much, as Mr. Peirce pretends, in point of Discipline, to boast of. Mr. Peirce himself,

it seems, was one of the Gentlemen who received this Discipline, on Account of *his* Heresy about the Trinity; and 'tis worth while to know how he behaved under it. Why truly, Sir, not at all like the Man who had been calling, before, so loudly upon the Church of *England* to reject all Hereticks, who laid such a Load of Reproach upon it for its Slackness and Remissness, and set such a high Value upon *your* Churches for their Care and Diligence in that Matter, but rather like one who held it unwarrantable to molest any, on such Accounts: For all the Proceedings against him he was pleased to call *Violence, Tyranny, Persecution, an Inquisition as true as ever there were any in Spain or Portugal*, as may be seen in the Pamphlets by him publish'd, on that Occasion. This, Sir, is *he* who had writ, a very little while before, *Why don't they use as much Discipline, and keep Hereticks from their Communion, as they see we do!*

The Disputes among the *London* Ministers, at the same Time, about Subscribing or not Subscribing, the first Article of the Church of *England*, and the 5th and 6th Answers of the Assembly's Catechism, concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity, will not be soon forgotten. Those who were for Subscribing considered, generally, the other, as *Arians*; and it is, from their Writings, too plain, that many of them really were. And *these*, on the other Hand, considered *them*, as *Athanasians*, that is to say, as great Hereticks, in their Opinions, as they, *themselves*, were reputed to be by *their* Adversaries. Yet I don't remember there was much *ejecting*, or *rejecting* among you, on that Occasion: But by the Help of *Comprehensive Principles*, and of some pacific Treatises, such as *The conciliatory Letter, The Apology for both Parties, The Doctrine of the Trinity no Fundamental*, &c. together

gether with a little Reflection upon the Danger of ruining the Dissenting Interest by your Divisions, Matters were brought, at length, to an amicable Accommodation, each Party receiving, as Brethern, and running into the Embraces of the other. Such Hereticators are *you*, Sir! Such is the Rigour of *your* Discipline! And so it is you *turn Hereticks out of your Communion!*

As to notorious evil Livers, it no way appears to me, they have any Reason to be afraid of greater Molestation from *your* Discipline, than from *ours*. *Excommunications*, I suppose, are not very frequent among you: *Authoritative Admonitions* before the Church, for great Scandals and Offences, are as little heard of; and a *publick Penance*, in one of *your* Congregations, would be, I presume, a new Thing to behold. Our Country, Sir, you know, abounds with Dissenters of all Sorts; and tho' I have lived in it the greatest Part of my Life, yet, to the best of my Remembrance, no one Act of Church Discipline, in either of those Kinds, has ever been reported to me, or come, any way, to my Knowledge, tho' I have known many who deserved it, and some who did as richly deserve the severest Exercise thereof, as the incestuous *Corinthian*. Which I mention, because I know you are all apt to say, there is not much need of Discipline on Account of *disorderly and offensive Walking*, in *your* Churches. Formerly, perhaps, it might be so; but *now*, *Toleration*, *Ease*, *Security*, and a *general overflowing of Luxury* in the Nation, have brought Things between *you* and *us*, as to the Strictness of our living, pretty near a Level, as I have shewn more at large in my first Letter, which I refer you to.

Here then I shall rest the Matter: There is, in our Church a Want of Discipline confessed; but

there is an *equal* or *greater* Want of it, tho' not so ingenuously confessed, in *yours*. We have, at least, the *Shadow* of it, which, I doubt, can't be said for *you*. All the Forms of it, to be sure, (and that is something towards its Revival and Restoration) are kept up among *us*; and we trust in God, *these dry Bones will*, one Day, *live*, and that by his Holy Spirit's working, in his good Time, upon the Minds, especially, of those who have it most in their Power, and are more properly concerned, these Forms will be animated with such a vigorous Exercise of that Power which God has given to his Church, as will reasonably well answer the End of it.

Vain indeed, and visionary are these Hopes, if what you say be true; for you say, the whole Frame and Constitution of the Church must be taken down, and one of another Sort erected, before a regular Discipline can be introduced. But God forbid we should be reduced to such an unhappy Alternative, that either Foundations must be removed, or we must, for ever, be content with our present State of Discipline, and that general Relaxation of it which it now lies under. Let us then see whether the Case be really so bad; whether the present Constitution of our Church will not *admit* of good Discipline, and whether your Churches are *better calculated* for it.

You assert, there is no Possibility of an exact Discipline in Diocesan Churches; and the Reason of this extraordinary Assertion is no better than this, that 'tis impossible one Bishop should Personally inspect and take the Cognizance of all Things and Causes that arise within a large District; a Reason that holds as strong against all Governments, Civil as well as Ecclesiastical, that are of any Extent. And how much stronger is it against the *British*
Monarchy,

Monarchy, which contains, in *England and Ireland*, almost fifty of those Dioceses, besides a large Country of Presbyterian Ground at home; and many large Provinces of the *American World*. Doubtless, you will say, the King governs the Realm by subordinate Magistrates, who are Sharers of his Power. And does not the Bishop rule his Diocese *so*? And why, Sir, *may not* that be? Mr. *Baxter*, I think, allows he *may* substitute another to toll the Bell to Church. So far, he is very good, and we thank him for it. But may do nothing else *per alium*? Whatever is done besides, must he needs be, *in propria Persona*, the Doer of it? For what Reason, I pray? What is there in *Episcopacy* more than in *Royalty*, that none of the Powers of it *can* or *ought* to be delegated, but every Thing must be done by the Bishop only, or, however, under his *immediate* Inspection? at least, why must a *Bishop* have an *immediate* and *personal* Concern, in every Thing and Matter that is done, more than an *Apostle*? For it is evident, St. *Paul* had not. He tells the *Corinthians* (1 Cor. i. 17.) that *Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel*. The former, it seems, was not *so much*, and *so immediately*, his Work, as the latter: And therefore to *this* he almost wholly applied himself, leaving *that* to others, whom he had appointed over that Business. And he, accordingly, tells them (thanking God for it too, so far was he from thinking it any *Neglect* or *Failure* in his Duty) *he had baptized none of them but Crispus and Gaius*, tho' he had lived there (and we may be sure was not idle) a long Time, and (as appears from *Acts* xviii. 8, 10.) made many Converts in their City.

The Pretence of the Impossibility of good Discipline under Diocesan Episcopacy is perfectly groundless and unreasonable. For, surely, there
may

may be good Discipline wherever there *may be* good Laws, and a due Execution of them. And why both *may not be* in Diocesan Churches, I am at a Loss to comprehend. It will hardly, I think, be denied by the stoutest of you all, but, that good and wholesome Laws *may be* made under Diocesan Governments; and those who, in Subordination to the Bishop, are to execute those Laws, or any of them, *may*, of themselves, do it, as conscientiously, as he himself would have done; and such as are negligent of their Duty he can compel to it. — If this, Sir, does not satisfy, (as I think it may) we have plain and undeniable *Fact* to appeal to. The Discipline of the *Primitive* Church you must allow was *good*; else, why is the *present* Church reproached for the Want of it, and call'd upon *so* to restore it: And yet this was exercised under Diocesan Episcopacy, and where the Dioceses, too, were sometimes as large as most of ours are, which learned Men, whom I could refer you to, have abundantly demonstrated. Here, then, we have an *Argument against Fact*, which every body knows, and *common Sense* will teach us, is worth nothing. For if it be certain, a Thing *has been*, all the Arguments and Speculations in the World, will not be convincing that it *cannot be*.

But be, Sir, this Matter as it will, I don't see how it is mended by the *Presbyterian* Platform, wherein the Exercise of Discipline, in most Cases, is *wholly reserved*, in others, *ultimately resorts* to certain Assemblies of the Clergy. The Constitution of the Church of *Scotland* is, I suppose, truly Presbyterian; but, in that, I perceive, the *Kirk Session*, or *Parish-Consistory*, which is composed of Ministers, Elders, and Deacons, judges only in Matters of lesser Scandal, and in these, too, there lies an Appeal from *them*. All Matters of greater
Scandal,

Scandal, such as *Adultery, &c.* are left, in the first Instance, to the *Presbytery* of the Place, and from these also is an Appeal to the *Provincial Synods*, as, from these Synods, there is a *farther Appeal* to the *general Assemblies of the Clergy*. The general Assembly, therefore, has, you see, the Cognizance of all Causes whatsoever that arise within the Church of *Scotland*; and that, you know, is of equal Extent with a good Number of our Dioceses put together. 'Tis like, you will say, *that Assembly* is made up of *many*. My Answer is, they *all* stand upon the *same Ground*; and if forty Men are placed together upon an Eminence, they can't see farther than any one of them may, provided his Eye-sight be as good as that of the rest.

But why do I speak of *Presbyteries, Synods, and National Assemblies*, when we have, I suppose, no such Things in *England*. For tho' we have Churches which *are pleased to be called Presbyterian*, these are govern'd as absolutely (for what I can see) as the rest, by their own Officers, the Pastors and Elders of the Church, from whom there is no Appeal to any proper superior Jurisdiction, which is the very Essence of Independency. Let us then see, if the independent or congregational Plan be better calculated for good Discipline: And I doubt it will be found, that, if, in *Diocesan* Episcopacy, the District is *too large* for good Order and Discipline to be kept up in, in *Congregational*, it is *too small*; if, in the former, the Governors and Governed are *too far off*, in the latter, they are as much *too near*.

The Plan of Independency is, that every Congregation or worshipping Assembly has a compleat Jurisdiction, and is entirely govern'd within itself. Here, now, is a Crowd of petty independent Jurisdictions, fifty, and, perhaps, more, nay, a hundred,

hundred, or, as it may happen, several hundreds, within the same Walls. For (say your Independents) any six or seven covenanting together will make a Church compleatly organized; three or four composing the *Presbytery*, and the *Fraternity* consisting of three or four more. A very pretty Constitution! A Constitution which must produce continual Dissentions, Dissentions too without Remedy, and, as such, was condemned by the *French Church* in the third *Synod of Charenton* ^k, where it is declared *not only prejudicial to the Church of God (because as much as in it lieth, it doth usher in Confusion, and openeth a Door to all Kinds of Singularities, Irregularities and Extravagancies, and barreth the Use of those Means which would most effectually prevent them) but also is very dangerous to the Civil State, as forming as many Religions as there are Parishes, and particular distinct Assemblies among them.* It is almost unavoidable but each of these Congregations will have some singular Opinions and Practices of its own, which falling immediately under the Eye and Observation of all the Neighbouring Congregations, will be extremely offensive to them, from whence Controversies and perverse Disputings will naturally arise. And how shall they be ended, there being no Authority that can silence, controul, or censure the Contumacious. Synods may meet, and talk over the Matter, and give their *humble Advice* upon it: But, by their common Principles, (for they are all, Sir, you know, *absolutely independent* of each other) none shall need to submit to them any farther than they think fit.

As to Offences that may arise within their particular Congregations, 'tis own'd, the Independent Constitution lodges Authority enough in the Church and the Officers thereof, to take them away, or

^k *Quick's Synodicon.*

reform them, if they were but disposed to *use* it, and the People equally disposed to *submit* to it. Every Parish or Congregation has as much Power as *the Sovereign Pontiff himself*, in Spirituals; indeed a great deal more than is fit to be put into the Hands of such Persons, as 'tis commonly entrusted with. The Plenitude of Ecclesiastical Power is too great a Trust to be committed to every Teacher, Elder, and Deacon, or indeed to every Pastor or Minister of God's Word, and particularly (to say nothing of those, who in advanced Years are rash or weak, or indiscreet) to every *young* Divine, who, nevertheless, in hopes of future Proficiency in Knowledge, and Increase of Experience, may be trusted, as in our Church, with the Function of Preaching, and Administring Sacraments to a Congregation, under *the Guidance and Controul of another*. Here, the Parish Priest has as much Jurisdiction as is convenient and reasonable he should. He has a Power to admit all to Baptism who are entitled to it. He has also as much Power as any Presbyterian or Congregational Minister, to repel open and scandalous Sinners from the Lord's Table, only *signifying* (which, surely, is but reasonable) *to the Ordinary*, and that only, *if he require it, or any Complaint be made, the Cause thereof, and obeying therein his Direction*. No Excommunication of his Parishioners can take Effect, without his Concurrence. But to put the whole Power of Excommunication into *his* Hands, would be as unreasonable and of as ill Consequence, as to give the Mayor of any mean Corporation an absolute Right to deprive, at Pleasure, any Member thereof of the Benefit of the Laws, and put him out of the King's Protection.

Considering, then, how great an Authority the Pastors and other Officers of these Churches have, a Man would expect a very great Regulation of
E Affairs,

Affairs, that all Things amiss should be rectified, all Abuses removed, and that no Person deserving Animadversion should pass unreprieved, or uncensured. But, alas, there are many Things that hinder; as, *First, the great Dispersion of their Flocks.* These Gentlemen, Sir, your Ministers, are a Sort of Pluralists: Their People commonly live, here below in the Country, dispersed through ten or a dozen Parishes, and these, too, in *Ireland*, and some Parts of *England*, Parishes of great extent. Above, they are scattered through every Part of the great Cities of *London*, *Westminster*, and the *Borough*; and it may be reasonably supposed, there is hardly a Parish, nay, scarcely a Street or Lane, but sends some of its Inhabitants to help make up your larger Congregations. And hence it is that your Pastors have little more Knowledge of a great Part of those who embrace their Ministry, and attend their Preaching, than any Methodist-Preacher has of those who, from all Parts of the Town, flock after him, and are hardly more capable than *he* of watching over their Conversation, in a *pastoral* Manner.

But, suppose their Flocks were collected, and had their ordinary Habitations, as in the establish'd Church, within parochial Bounds, and they had, under their Eye, and more immediate Observation, all manner of Persons and Offences they are concerned with, it may be fairly supposed, they will be pretty indulgent to such of their Flocks as may stand in need of Reproof, or deserve Censure, by Reason they so much depend upon their Benevolence, often, perhaps, for their whole Maintenance. Or if they have *Fortitude* enough (which I will charitably suppose many have) to cast behind them all Considerations of that Sort, they will be often kept from exercising Discipline with an impartial Strictness, by their Foresight of those Heats, Rup-
tures,

tures, and Confusions, and that Estrangement of their People's Affections which it will naturally occasion. And if it be ask'd whether this Consideration will not equally impede the Exercise of Discipline in Diocesan Churches, I answer, *No*; because it is in human Nature to bear the Severities of Discipline from their Spiritual Pastors *at some Distance*, with more Patience and Resignation, than from their *immediate Guides*, by whom they expect, tho' indeed often without Reason, to be always treated with the *greatest Indulgence*, and led with all the *Gentleness* in the World.

Then again, it is well known, there are always many of your Churches without *proper* Pastors, having no other than some young Men, who are *Candidates* for the Ministry, to pray and preach *before* them, till they have some Evidence of the Acceptableness of their Gifts. May these, Sir, take upon them to *rebuke*, and to *rebuke with Authority*? No certainly; they have no Authority at all. May they presume to censure, or excommunicate any? By no Means; these are Acts of *Pastoral Power* and *Jurisdiction*, not to be attempted by mere Probationers, not until they have been ordained, and solemnly called by some Congregation to take the Pastoral Charge of it. 'Tis therefore evident, that as long as they continue in the *probationary* State (and we are well informed, that is, sometimes, for many Years) there can be *no Discipline* in those Churches.

As to Lay-Elders, the other ruling Power in many Congregations, (for in *some*, it should seem, by *Heads of Agreement* in 1691 there were not any, as tis like also there are not now) here and there one, it may be, proud of his Office, and fond of the Power it gives him, may be busy enough in it. But for the generality, we may partly judge, by the Disposition of our Church-Wardens, (who are

commonly Men of the same Rank) and that *Reluctancy* they often discover in making their Presentments, notwithstanding they are bound by their Oaths to do it, that, if they live in Amity with their Neighbours, they are not like to be very severe upon them ; especially, if they are not only *Neighbours*, but also *Kindred*, or *good Customers*. But if there be any grudge between them, then the Censures of the Church will be in Danger of being *prostituted*, to serve the Purposes of Ill-will, Malice, and Revenge. At least, those that suffer under them will be apt to suppose, and give out, that *so* it is, whether it be, or not. Hence they will slight those Censures, grow refractory, unwilling to submit, and the more so, if these Elders happen to be Persons of mean Endowments, and small Experience, as, in many Congregations, they must be supposed to be, or much inferior, on all Worldly Accounts, to those whom they exercise Dominion over.

*Tune Syri, Damæ, aut Dionysî filius audes
Dejicere è saxo cives, aut tradere Cadmo ?*

If any little Tradesman or Mechanick of a Lay-Elder should take upon him to call *you*, Sir, to Account for any Offence he should pretend or fancy you had given, I am ready to think, that, with all your Humility, you would be apt to spurn him, in those Words of our old Friend *Horace*, or some other like them ; and look where you will, I am pretty confident you will find *Fact* exactly corresponding with my *Theory*.

But to proceed : We are not only charged with the *Want* of proper Discipline, but with *great Faults* in the Discipline we have. I will mention two or three. That Jurisdiction which (say *you*) ought to have been in the *Parish Priests* is often put into the Hands of *Lay-Chancellors*. Now,
who

who would have thought that ever a Charge of this Nature would have been exhibited by any *Dissenter*, by one of those who have evidently taken much larger Strides in this *Sacrilegious Usurpation*, this *Profanation of a most dreadful Part of Christ's Government*, as, I think, one of you call it, than this amounts to. If *Lay-Chancellors* had been allowed to take upon themselves *settled Cures*, and to officiate therein, it would have been a Thing that might have deserved some declaiming. And yet, as much as this do *you*, permitting Men to occupy the Place of Pastors, in *settled* Congregations, to preach and pray constantly *before* them, sometimes, (as I noted before) many Years together, before their *pretended* Ordination. The Power of the Keys is also exercised in another-guise Manner by *Lay-Elders*, than by *Lay-Chancellors*. They are both pretty much upon a footing as to Scripture Warrant and Authority; and yet, your *Lay-Elders*, in the Plan of Presbyterian Church-Government, are an essential Part of all Consistories and Synods. They sit in them, and have an equal Vote with the Pastors, in all Business, both in the making of new Laws, and executing the old. Jointly with *him*, they *suspend* from the Lord's Table, they *excommunicate*, and they do it, too, by a Power which is supposed *inherent*, and properly their *own*; whereas *Lay-Chancellors* act by an Authority derived from the Bishop, and, in the Matter of Excommunication, only declare, as Civilians, what is Law, the Sentence being pronounced, as well in Court, as at Church, by Ecclesiastical Persons. — After all, there may be, perchance, some Irregularity on both Sides. On *yours*, it is never like to be taken away; on *ours*, it is taken away by most of my Lords, the Bishops. And if it *never* be by *all*, I would desire to know, how it comes to pass, that *we*
should

should be held so *guilty* for admitting the Jurisdiction of *Lay-Chancellors* in our Ecclesiastical Courts *only*, while *you* are perfectly blameless in not only allowing a much higher Jurisdiction of Laymen in your very Consistories and Synods, but of Lay-preaching and Lay-praying also in your publick Congregations, which, without question, is a much greater Abuse and Profanation.

You must be sensible, Sir, that this Charge may be fairly retorted upon *your Churches* of *all* Denominations, even those that are *called* and *are* Presbyterian (if, indeed, there *are* any such among you) but, in a more particular and especial Manner, upon those of the Congregational way. For *these* not only *connive* at the *Practice*, but openly *maintain* the *Right* of Lay-preaching and Praying, and Lay-ordination too. Nay, the whole Power of the Keys, according to *them*, is *originally* in the Lay-People, and they, accordingly, exercise, as there is Occasion, every Part of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction. What Right, Sir, have *these* to reproach the Church (they are the last Men in the World that should reproach her) with her Lay-Chancellors, and to talk of a Profanation for only being assumed by the Bishop, not to do any Act that is *purely Spiritual*, but only to be his *Assistants* in his ecclesiastical and judicial Proceedings.

We are also, it seems, accountable (which is a little hard) for those *Prohibitions* with which our Discipline is sometimes embarrassed, and such other Restraints and Modifications thereof, as the *civil Powers* have been pleased, in some Cases, to lay it under. For these we are twitted by Mr. *Peirce*, who, jeeringly, tells us, *it is not owing to you, but to the Constitution of our Church, that we can make no Ecclesiastical Laws without the Consent of the Government.* It is well, Sir, for you that you can.

can. But why then do we see none of *your* making? And I would know, too, whom it is owing to, and whether it be not owing to the Constitution of Presbyterian Churches here in *England*, that they have no Presbyteries, Synods, and Assemblies. In his Dedication to the Church of *Scotland* of this very Book, wherein the Church of *England* is so upbraided and insulted, for submitting to be limited by the Civil Powers, in making Ecclesiastical Constitutions, he has some distant obscure Innuendo's (as it appears to me) about this Matter. He talks there of *a Design* about the latter End of the last Century, to set up a general Correspondence among Dissenters, such as the Quakers have practised for many Years — *of the ill Usage and Cavils of their Adversaries of representing them as Despisers of the King's Power in Spirituals*, which he gives as the Reason *why the Order of their Churches is not more agreeable to that which is in Use in Scotland, and other reformed Churches*. Methinks, Sir, a little *Eclaircissement* is needful in this Place. But if it *be* meant, as it seems to be, of a Design to set up Presbyteries, and Synods, which the Government would not permit them to do, here is *submitting* (since *Submission* is such a *criminal Thing*) to *Limitations*, and *Prohibitions*, on *their* Parts. But whether it be true, or not, that the Government will not permit them to have Synods, and and other regular Assemblies of their Ministers, the *Fact*, that they have them *not*, is evident. And that must be own'd by all true and genuine Presbyterians, a far greater defect in *their* Churches, and a fouler Disgrace to *their* Discipline, than any they can name in *ours*. For such Assemblies are the *Characteristicks*, and constitute the very *Essence* of *Presbyterian* Churches ; and for *them* to be without them is much the same Thing, as for *Episcopal* Churches to have no Bishops. This

This Gentleman, Sir, has been pleased, too, to shew some of his *Smartness* upon another Article of our Discipline, to wit, *the Commutation of Penance*, which (to say true) many Conformists, as well as he, have been offended at, and the more, I presume, for not well understanding the Thing, and the Reason of it. It is a Privilege sometimes indulged to Persons of Condition, to redeem themselves from the Reproach and Shame of publick Penance, by a Sum, which is distributed to pious and charitable Uses : And this, if not *strictly* and *ecclesiastically* right, may yet be thought defensible, in the present State of Things. Mr. *Peirce* says, *it is turning Penance into a Money-business*. Well, be it so : Yet this *Money-business*, or (to speak out of *Sarcasm*) this *pecuniary Penalty* may have its use, and do some good. The levying a Shilling, according to the Statute, on any Person who does not repair to Church every Lord's Day, we may call, too, if we please, a *Money-business* ; yet I have never heard, *that* Statute incur'd the Displeasure, or fell under the Censure of any Dissenter, but have always thought *you* esteemed it a good Law, as *we* do, for securing the due Observation of that Day ; few being willing to pay down, perhaps, the whole Earnings of one of the six Days, to purchase an absence from Church, on the Seventh. When a Man is obliged to pay down, for his Crimes, a Sum, greater, perhaps, than he can well spare, it will make him take heed how he brings himself again into the like Snare, and help more to make him alter his Course of Life, than *looking Shame in the Face*, in a public Assembly, would be like to do. For tho' that, too, may have a good Effect upon *some Sorts* of Offenders, as well as be a Terror to *others* that are yet innocent, it would be apt to make *other sorts* of them, particularly, the Rich, and,

especially, if they were proud and high-minded too, as the Apostle insinuates they are all apt to be; on account of their Riches, only the more impudently and desperately wicked. — However, this Sort of Punishment must be allowed better than none at all, and letting Offenders escape, as, I suppose, Sir, is commonly done among you, without *Penance* or *Commutation* either.

As to the antient Discipline, I am free to own, it did not allow of *Commutation*; and Mr. *Peirce* is much in the right, when he observes, *Ambrose was ignorant of it, when he forced the Emperor Theodosius to confess his Sin publicly in the Church.* Yes, truly, in those Times, the *Rich* and *Honourable*, as well as the *Poor* and *Base*, had *Humility* enough to submit to Ecclesiastical Censures, nor thought it a Thing beneath their Dignity and Rank to make an open Confession of their Sins, and to seek the Peace and Reconciliation of the Church, with Tears. And when it is so here in *England*, I shall not stick to say, “ Away with Commutations, not let them be named among us.” — I shall only add, these Commutations are entirely retrospective, and only Punishments for Offences which Men have formerly committed, and, perhaps, have since repented of; and if they go on in their Sins, no such Favour, I hope, is ever allowed them, a second Time.

You have other Objections which may be as easily, as those I have already considered, retorted upon you. Shall I mention the *Ceremony* (as your Writers love to call it) of the *Surplice*? Or, shall I pass it by; supposing you are now ashamed of the great Controversy of the *Habits*, and have resigned all your Scruples about *this*, in particular? I almost fancy you have; but if you have *not*, you may be pleased to remember the *Ceremony* of the

long sweeping black Cloak, peculiar to your Ministers, which is esteemed by *you*, and used by *them* as an Ecclesiastical Habit, for the Sake (you own) of its Significancy of Gravity, as the Surplice (you say) is used by *us*, for its being significant of Purity of Life, tho', by the bye, the Church has no where declared it to be used, on any such Account.

But the reading of certain Apocryphal Books in our Churches, while some Parts of the Scripture are omitted to make (as you call it) Room for them, and even the binding them in the same Volume with the Scriptures, is, still, a Matter of mighty Offence. The binding them together makes them look (you think) as if the one was written by Inspiration of God, as well as the other, and of the same Authority with it. And yet the Common-Prayer is often found under the same Cover, while no body takes it (I dare say) to be the immediate Word of God, ever the more for *that* : Nor does any one take the Hymns and Doxologies that have sometimes been printed and bound up with the Psalms of *David*, for the Use of Psalmody, in *your* Churches, as well as *ours*, to be as Canonical, as those Psalms. I think, we have a Collection of Hymns and Spiritual Songs upon a great Variety of Divine Subjects, and some, particularly, for the Lord's Supper, composed by Dr. *Watts*, which he has bound up together with his *Paraphrases* or *Translations* of certain Portions of Scripture, for the Use of your Congregations, and the Improvement of the Psalmody thereof. Now, do your People, Sir, esteem those of his own Composure of the same Authority with the other, because he has thought proper to bind and publish them together ? And, as to the reading the *Apocrypha* in our Churches, *for Example of Life, and Instruction of the*
Manners

Manners of the People, I know not why it should not be held, on all Accounts, as justifiable, as singing the Hymns and Songs of that Gentleman, for the Increase and Furtherance of their Devotion ^m. That Gentleman, I perceive, does not fall in *with the last and Inclination of those who think nothing must be sung unto God, but the Translations of his own Word*. And therefore, one would think he could not readily fall in with *their* Taste and Inclination, who would have nothing *read to the People*, besides the Translations of God's Word. And if some Part of Canonical Scripture be omitted *to make room* for reading the Apocryphal, so it is, (and, I think, with less Reason) *to make way* for singing the Hymns and Spiritual Songs beforementioned. If certain useful and instructive Parts of the *Apocrypha* are read, while long Genealogies, mysterious and obscure Prophecies in the Canonical Books, which the Learned themselves are puzzled with, are omitted, this is plainly done for the better Edification of the People, which you, who hold it right to forsake the Communion of the Church, only for better Edifying, could not (one would think) be displeased at. And the same may be said for omitting, in the Course of the Lessons, some other Holy and Canonical Scriptures, for instance, the Song of *Solomon*, the reading of which, in a mixt and popular Assembly, by reason of its parabolical Turn, and peculiar Phrase, might be attended with some Inconvenience ⁿ. Mr. *Peirce*, I perceive, is for its being read, because, I suppose, the Church has *not* appointed it to be read: And if it *had* done so, I am pretty confident (such was the Temper and Spirit of that Gentleman) he would have been as much against it, and called the Synod ^o, in his jeering

^m See his Preface to Hymns and Spiritual Songs, p. 10.

ⁿ *Vindicat. of Dissenters*, p. 3. c. 13. ^o *Ibid.*

way a *wise* Synod, which had made such an Order and Appointment. We should, then, in all likelihood, have been told, that the greatest Part of all popular Congregations would certainly rest in the plain and literal, and never carry their Thoughts into, or reap any Advantage from the allegorical and spiritual Meaning of that Divine Song; that it would, therefore, be apter to cause disorderly Motions, and to provoke Mirth in light and unsettled Minds, than to excite Attention and Devotion; and been put in Mind of that Order among the *Jews*, that none should read it, even in private, 'till they were thirty Years old. — After all, it is not very seemly, or consistent, in this Gentleman and his Brethren, to censure the Church of *England* for not publicly reading the *whole* Scripture, if what is commonly said be true, that, in some of their *own* Congregations, *hardly any at all* is read, and little, comparatively, where any *is*. Mr. *Peirce* himself can't but acknowledge, ^p and does, that *setting aside the Psalms, Epistles, and Gospels, more Scripture is read in two Months in our Churches, than is done in a Year, in their largest Meetings*. Only he says, they read them more in their Families, which may be true or otherwise, for what either he, or I know; especially, now a-days, when Family Prayer and reading the Scriptures are not so much used as heretofore, ^q and a *greater Degeneracy in Proportion, in these Respects, is reigning and visible among you, than your conforming Neighbours*. And it should be remembered, too, how many Families there are of the poorer Sort, who have no Bible to read at home, and cannot read it, if they had.

Keeping the *Feasts* and *Fasts* of the Church is another Stumbling-block in the Way to Confor-

^p *Ibid.* ^q *Watts's Humble Attempt*, p. 223.

mity;

mity ; when, too, it is notorious, that, in the Church of *England*, no body, now, need keep them, unless they chuse it, and that the Way of keeping them is neither more nor less, than going to Church to say our Prayers, to commemorate some of the special Mercies of God towards us, in regard to our Redemption, and to hear the Scriptures read relative thereto, and to praise God for the Doctrine and Examples of his holy Apostles, and other Saints, who were the glorious Instruments of conveying the Knowledge of *Jesus Christ* to us. One would wonder how any intelligent Dissenter can be offended at *this*, more than he is at those Days of *Solemn Thanksgiving* to Almighty God for his Mercies and Blessings of a temporal or civil Nature, or even those *Lectures*, that are weekly, or occasionally preach'd at your Meeting. — And as to keeping the Festival of our Lord's Nativity, which has been more particularly objected to, you seem not to have, now a-days, so far as my Observation reaches, *any Scruples at all* about the *feasting Part*, which is certainly the most exceptionable, but come as *cheerfully* into it, as your conforming Neighbours, and only *stick* at the *Religious*. And you stick at *this*, it seems, because you are not certain our Lord was born on that Day on which the Church celebrates his Nativity. But see, Sir, your Inconsistence and Partiality — In the second Century, there was a great Controversy between the Eastern and Western Churches, about the *right* Day of keeping Easter. *This* Mr. *Peirce* calls ' an idle Contest, and whenever any of your Ministers have Occasion to speak of it, they represent it after the same manner, and never fail to slur the Fathers of the Church, as a Company of simple, unreasonable, and perverse Men, for raising such Stirs, and

† *Vindicat. of Dissenters*, Part 3. ch. 11. p. 226.

making

making a Schism about so poor a Point as keeping Easter on *this* or on *that* Day. But, how comes it, then, to pass, that their keeping *Easter* on a *wrong* Day was so *small* a Matter, if our keeping *Christmas* on a *Wrong* (supposing we really do) is so *great* a one; and how are those Fathers to be blamed for contending and making a Schism about the former, if you, and your Brethren are without blame, when you justify your Schism by the latter.

I trust now I have plainly shewn, that your most popular Arguments against Communion with the Church are insufficient, and, besides, that they equally press against Communion with your *own* Churches: And the Matter, as one would imagine, might be safely rested *here*. But there may be, perhaps, one Scruple or Difficulty behind; and tho', from the Tenor of that just and reasonable Declaration you made to me, which gave Occasion to *this*, and the *former* Letter, I should hope it would be no Difficulty with *you*, yet, for fear it should, and lest it should rise in your Mind, as a Retreat and Subterfuge to avoid Conformity, when you are fairly beaten out of your other Holds and Fastnesses, it may not be improper to say to it just so much as may be thought sufficient either to prevent, or to remove it.

The Scruple or Difficulty is, *the Danger of giving Offence, by Conformity, to weak Brethren*. When the vulgar and more ignorant Sort of Dissenters plead *this*, they mean no more by giving them Offence than making them *angry*, or putting them *out of Humour*, or, at most, *grieving* them, or giving them some *Trouble* or *Concern*, which, (they say) by *all* Means should be avoided. No surely, not by *all* Means avoided; not (for Example) by *offending* God, in doing ought is contrary to their Duty, or neglecting to do ought that Duty requires
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of them. Let us go and learn this Lesson, that we are to *please*, as well as *obey God*, rather than *Man*. In the mean while, it is Matter of Wonder, that since they are so afraid of offending *Men*, no Consideration at all should be had of offending *us*, their Brethren of the Church of *England*, who are, unquestionably, *many more in Number*, (tho' we may not perhaps, pique ourselves so much upon account of our *Weakness*) and, 'tis like, are as much *grieved* and *concerned*, if not quite so *angry* and *displeased*, at their *Non-conformity*, as their Dissenting Brethren could be, at their *Conformity* to the Church.

As to *you Sir*, (I dare say) you have no Scruple of this Sort; I mean, no Fear or Apprehension of offending, in *this* Sense of offending, by your Conformity, but are as much (as indeed all should be) above the Fear of displeasing any Man whatsoever, by embracing the Communion of the Church of *England*, when you shall come to think, it is, in itself, a right Thing to do so, as you are above the Weakness of imagining, you ought to continue, rather than displease, in your present Separation from it. The true Scripture-Notion of *Offending* you are not, I suppose, unapprized of: It is neither more nor less than setting a *Trap*, or *Gin*, to ensnare any one, or laying a *stumbling Block* in his Way, to occasion his falling into Sin; and I can easily conceive how *you*, or *any* Man of Sense, may inconsiderately fall into an Opinion, that, by his Conformity, some weak *Christians* may be led, or drawn into Sin. A Gentleman, like *you*, of considerable Sway, Authority, and Influence in the Place where he lives, or a Minister in great Reputation and Esteem, may conceive, that his Conformity to the Church would be a Hurt to Religion, that many who had before a high Opinion of his Wisdom and Integrity, seeing his Compliance,

which

which they might hold to be sinful, and, perhaps, also, suspect to proceed from other Motives than a real Conviction of the Lawfulness thereof, might be thereby tempted, and the more easily reconciled, to give way, upon occasion, to sinful Compliances in *other* Instances, and, perhaps, also, in *the very same*, conforming, as *he* does, without having received the same Satisfaction concerning the Lawfulness of it which *he* has ; which would be a Sin. And I verily believe some of your Ministers themselves keep off from the Communion of the Church, and go on in the Ways of Separation, meerly upon this Scruple. They could well enough conform, but do it not, lest People should be scandalized thereat, and Religion receive Damage : And if, among these, there should be found *one* of distinguish'd Learning and Abilities, as well as other Merit, who would not wonder and be grieved at it ?

It is not, indeed, a new Thing for the greatest Men (as if they were under some Enchantment) not to know how to get out of certain particular Tracts of thinking, tho' they be ever so evidently and palpably wrong ; and that the Way of thinking which these Gentlemen are in, is thus palpably wrong, you will soon be (I hope) made sensible. You don't think it, I suppose, a Thing *scandalous in itself* to *live* in the Communion of our Church ; and when 'tis considered, that *you* say, *yourselves*, you differ little from the Church in Matters of Doctrine, but only in Ceremonies and external Rites, I hope it will not be thought any great Matter of Offence to *come over* to it. And, indeed, why it should be thought a greater Offence for one of *you* to come over to *us*, than you esteem it for one of *us* to go over to *you*, I can't readily comprehend. I could never observe, that any Conversions from *our* Church to *yours* were a *Grief* to you, or that
any

any of you ever *discouraged* them, for fear of their *giving Offence to weak Consciences*; but, on the contrary, have always observed, they were Matter of *great Satisfaction and Content*, and always the greater, by how much the Persons were more eminent and considerable in the Church, and their Change (consequently) likely to prove more scandalous. Which evidently shews, (as one would think) you have no great Notion, that a *bare* Change is any reasonable Occasion of Offence. Circumstances, I allow, in particular Cases, may be such as shall make it so, as when one conforms with manifest Views of Covetousness, or Ambition, or any other Views of a like Sort. But, in the Case of most private Christians, and particularly your own, there is little room for any such Suspicion; and where there is more, as perhaps there may be in the Case of Ministers conforming, if they are really apprehensive of any such Offence being taken at it, it may be, methinks, easily prevented, by publishing the Reasons for their Conformity, and openly declaring (if they intend to keep their Words) they will not accept any Dignities or Preferments in the Church so much above the Value of what they enjoy at present, as a reasonable Man can suspect was a Temptation to them, or any Motive and Inducement to their Change. And if they think not fit to lay themselves under any Limitations of that Sort, as being conscious of Abilities to do God eminent Service in the higher Stations of the Church, with a sincere Desire and full purpose of Heart to do him the best they can, and shall be, by his Providence, and the Favour of their Superiors, called to them, I know not why they should decline them, seeing it is in their Power to prevent any Scandal from ensuing, by a constant and regular Conformity, Diligence, and Faithfulness in

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their

their high and holy Calling, an humble un-aspiring Mind and Temper, a Conduct on all Occasions, perfectly disinterested, and an exemplary Life. And if, Sir, you will look about you, you will see Instances, ^s more than one, of Gentlemen who have *thus* conformed, who, far from scandalizing any by their Conformity, enjoy their Preferments and high Stations in the Church with the Applause, and live in the Esteem and Veneration of *all*, even of *those whom they have deserted*. And what *these* have done, *others*, certainly, *may* do, if *they* also conform upon *Principle*, and with the same *Purity of Intention* to serve God in the sacred Ministry of this Church; and any other than such we desire to have nothing to do with.

As to offending many, who may be moved, by the Opinion they have of you, to follow your Example, there really appears to me little Room for any *Fears and Apprehensions* of that Nature. For your People, Sir, whatever, in other Respects, they may be, are not observed, in this, to be like Sheep, that when one leaps the Fold, the rest follow; but, on the contrary, when any eminent Member, or learned Minister of your Churches comes to see he has Reason, and does, accordingly, resolve, to conform, the People, tho' they had, before, the highest Opinion of his Wisdom and Goodness, and, implicitly relied upon his Authority, generally *turn their backs* on him, and bid him go take *his own Course*, while they pursue *theirs*, and few follow him, unless it be *with Censures and Reproaches* for his leaving them. These are the only Sins which his Conformity is like to lead them into, which, however, *they*, and not *he* must be answerable for. But if more were to follow his Example, I really think, Sir, it would be so much the better;

§ Bishop of O——d, &c.

and

and heartily wish to God, you were, all, offended after that Manner ! For if his Authority were to draw you after him, that would be so far from a real Offence, that it would be the very *reverse* of it ; so far from *leading* you into Sin, that it would plainly be *plucking* you out of it. And indeed, whoever of you comes to be satisfied in his Mind of the Lawfulness of Conformity, and to think it his Duty, can do no less than endeavour, and take all Opportunities to satisfy others of it, and if he has been, any way, the Means of *perverting* them to, or *strengthening* and *confirming* them in their Non-conformity, he is bound, in Duty, to take some Pains to *bring them off* from it. I am, aware, you will say, you are only afraid of their following your Example, *against their Judgments*, and with a *doubting Conscience*. But be easy, Sir, I intreat you, upon that Head. For 'tis as well, and indeed better, they should follow you to *Church*, whither they ought to follow you, with a *doubting Conscience*, than, *with the same*, follow you to the *Meeting*, whither they ought not, as some in all probability, *now* do ; who either moved by your Authority, or influenced by the Hopes of recommending themselves to you, or the Fear of displeasing, and losing the Share they may already have in your Affections, keep off from the Church, which, otherwise, they would have resorted, and adhered to. Either way, (you see) by your Conformity or Non-conformity, some or other *may be* offended ; and, in such a Case, what is your Duty to do, but to conform, if, upon other Accounts, you think *that* right, leaving Contingences and Possibilities, which you can neither foresee nor prevent, and are not, therefore, answerable for, to the Care and Consciences of others who may be immediately concerned in them.

I must not dismiss this Head, without reminding you of one great *Scandal* which is *really given* by your Non-conformity, or those unhappy Dissentions that are kept up by you amongst us. They are a mighty *Offence* to *Jews, Turks, and Infidels*, and give them unworthy Thoughts of our Holy Religion. And those among ourselves who are disposed to think meanly or dishonourably of it, how do they triumph in them, and with what Pomp and Aggravation set them out to the World, as if they really thought them a sufficient Disproof of Christianity itself, or, at least, a legitimate Prejudice against it? And the *Papist*, in regard to the *Religion of Protestants*, makes the same Use of them that the *Free-Thinker* does, in reference to *Christianity in the gross*. The one *will* not be a Christian, because Christians are *so divided*, and because Protestants are *so divided*, the other *will* be no Protestant. He is always counting up, with Pleasure, our Heresies and Schisms, and from thence arguing, that his Church is the one Catholic and Apostolic Church, and there *can be* no other. No less a Man than the late Archbishop of *Cambray* argues, at this Rate, against no less an one than our late excellent Bishop *Bull*. *Is the Catholick Church* (says he) *a confused Heap of Societies, separated the one from the other?* And how can they be that *Kingdom of Christ* not divided against itself, and which never shall perish? And *Truth* (says ^t another, tho' not so great as he) cannot possibly be among *us*; for *Truth* is but *one*, and when Men have deviated from *that*, the Maze of Error is infinite. Our Divisions are set forth, too, as the just Judgments of God, for having forsaken the Communion of his Church; and as this Church and Nation is the chief Support, and strongest Sanctuary of the Protestant Religion,

it is (*quoth he*) more lamentably divided than almost any other. In this Manner (vain Man!) *he* argues; and no one Thing, I am persuaded, has helped more to confirm those of *his* Church in their old Errors, and given them more unconquerable Aversions to our Religion, than our Dissentions have: As, on the other hand, nothing has more help'd to unsettle the Minds of some of our own People, and make them Converts to Popery. And, accordingly, it was observed, that, in the late miserable Times, when the Church of *England* was removed, and an innumerable Spawn of Heresies and Schisms of various Forms and Hues covered the Land, not a few, and, of these, some of no mean Rank and Quality, or of no small Account for Learning, scandalized at our Divisions, went clean off from the Religion of Protestants to that corrupt Church, as the only Place (they thought) wherein they could hope to find either Truth, or Peace. I beseech you, Sir, *by the Mercies of God, and in the Bowels of our Lord Jesus Christ*, lay these Things seriously to Heart. Consider the Mischief you are doing, by your Dissention, to our Holy Religion, and to the Protestant Profession in particular, which you always express so tender a regard for; and when your Mind is forming to itself *imaginary* Dangers of some People's *taking Offence* at your embracing the Communion of the Church of *England*, for God's sake, reflect, that, by your separating from it, you do *really give* an Offence that is *infinitely greater*, and more *mischievous*.

And now, Sir, I flatter myself it plainly appears to *you*, and will to any other candid and unprejudiced Dissenter, into whose Hands these Papers may happen to fall, that this Scruple or Difficulty also is both easily answered, and retorted. And therefore

fore I hope you will now think of acquitting yourself of the Promise you gave me, *that you would and should think it your Duty rather to conform to the Church of England, than join yourself to any separate Congregation, in Case the common Arguments against Conformity could either be fairly answered, or fairly reflected.*

It was a Pleasure to me, to hear a Gentleman talk of *the Duty of Conforming* in any Case, as it shews, he is not got into the modern, latitudinarian, fashionable way of thinking, that there is no such Thing as *Duty* in relation to that Matter, but that every one is as much at Liberty (without any regard to Terms of Communion) to be of what Church he pleases, as he is to go to what Tavern, or be of what Club he likes best. No wonder, that Libertines and Rakes, who commonly make their Religion (what they have of it) out of their own Heads, should fall in with and embrace such a Notion: But we find it embraced by many who read and regard the Bible, as the Rule of their Lives and Conducts, and abundance of Pains is taken, more especially by those of *your Way*, to spread, and make it go current in the World. It must be confessed, 'tis a Notion admirably well calculated to serve the Purposes of all *Gatherers of Churches out of Churches*: Tho', methinks, too, the Notion is not very compatible with that Zeal and Industry they commonly discover in carrying on that Work; for if all Churches and Communions are indifferent, I know not why any one should give himself the least Trouble in making Profelytes from one to another; and if he believed in his Heart they *really were* so, you may depend upon it, he would *not* do it, unless Avarice, Ambition, Faction and Party-making, or some worldly Interest were at bottom.

I make no Question but you have often heard it
said,

said, as I sometimes have, *that no body will be ask'd what Church he was of at the Day of Judgment.* Surely, a very strange Saying! For, most certainly, it *will* then be enquired, not only how we have lived and behaved, as Men, but also, how we have behaved as Christians, as Members of the Church, and Subjects of the Kingdom of *Christ*. — Suppose I should go about to seduce you, or any other Gentleman, into Treason, or actual Rebellion against his Majesty, in Favour of a Pretender to his Crown, and, for reconciling your Conscience to it, should tell you, you need not fear involving your Souls in any Guilt, and endangering your Salvation, for that *no body will be ask'd what King he was for at the Day of Judgment*, would not you be ready to fly in my Face, as a profligate and abandoned Casuist, and very unfit to have the Care of Souls? Yes, you would: Now, there is just as much Sense, Honesty, and Divinity, in bearing you in hand, that *it will never be enquired, in that Day, what Church you were of*, to make your Conscience easy in the way of Schism. And whoever shall attempt, under such Colours as these, to entice Men into Treason, or Rebellion, on the one Hand, or into Schism, on the other, must be a Man either so weak, or so wicked, as to be very unfit to have the Direction of Mens Consciences.

We have known Scripture, most absurdly and ridiculously quoted, in Support of that Notion, *viz.* to shew, that no body need be concerned about *this* or *that* Religion, and less still, *this* or *that* Church, or Communion of Christians, but only provide for a good Life; as, particularly, that Declaration of St. Peter, *in every Nation he that feareth God, and worketh Righteousness is accepted of him.* No doubt but whoever fears God, and works Righteousness, as Cornelius *did*, will be accepted, as Cornelius

nelius was ; that is, his Righteousness will recommend him to God, may be a Means to procure him some farther Grace, and, perhaps, to bring him, if he be a Gentile, as it did that *Roman Soldier*, to the Knowledge of the Truth, as it is in Jesus. Or, if it be supposed that *Acceptance unto Salvation* is here meant, I shall move no Controversy about *that*, provided the Phrases *fearing God, and working Righteousness* be but interpreted fairly, in their just Latitude and Extent, so as to take in walking in *all* the Ways of God's Holy Laws, and *all* the Works of his Commandments. For *so* interpreted, they will not fit those who break one of his first and great Commandments, by sowing Dissentions, and causing Divisions and Offences in his Church. — But I see I am running, and that needlessly, from my Subject, there being, I am satisfied, no Danger you will ever be caught into an Opinion of the Indifferency of all Churches and Communion, by so crude a Saying, and such a palpable Misapplication of Scripture, in Support of it, as I have now mentioned. All the Danger is of your falling rather into the other Opinion, of the Necessity of separating from any Church, as particularly ours, for slight and insufficient Reasons, too weak to bear the Weight and Stress of such a formal and total Separation, as is laid upon them.

Since I have happened to pass this Censure upon the Insufficiency of those Reasons, which are commonly urged in Justification of your Dissent, and pronounced them *too weak to bear the Stress that is laid upon them*, you may, perhaps, be desirous to know, what really is, in my Opinion, sufficient to justify such a Separation as yours is ; nor shall I be unwilling to add a Word or two, for the farther Explanation of my Sense of that Matter. I am not, Sir, afraid to assert, that nothing will justify your
Separation,

Separation, but the imposing of sinful Terms of Communion *upon the Laity*. *Upon the Laity*, I say again, that you may remark it. *You*, Sir, who are Laics, may very honestly and conscientiously come to Church, and say your Prayers with *us*, whether the Gentlemen, your Ministers, *could* or *could not* make the usual Subscription and Declaration, or take the Oath of Canonical Obedience to the Bishop, and whether they *had*, or *had not* Reason to refuse it. 'Tis evident, *you* have no manner of Concern in those Things. And if those who *would be* Ministers hold it unlawful to comply with them; they may let it alone, and betake themselves to some other Profession, or way of Life, wherein they may eat their Bread with a quiet Conscience, and Gladness of Heart, and not be disquieted with Remorse, either for complying on the one hand, with the Conditions of Ministerial Conformity against their Judgments, or for disturbing, on the other, the Peace of the Church, for the Sake of a Maintenance. No body, Sir, goes about to compel these Gentlemen to enter into the Ministry: No body *wants* or *desires* them to do it. We are enough, of ourselves, to answer all the Wants and Occasions of the Church; or, if more Labourers were wanting, we could have them, and such, too, as believe and contend, that the Terms of their Ministerial Conformity are lawful, and may be very conscientiously complied with. And as to those who are already in the Ministry among you, let them shew their Christian Fortitude in trusting to God to provide for them, while they attend our Churches in the Character of Laymen, as they well know many of the old Non-conformists, their pretended Fathers, and many also of our Clergy lately did, when they could not comply with the State Oaths that were required of them, in order to the

Exercise of their Ministry ; and not cover themselves with the Pretence of a *Woe unto them if they preach not the Gospel*, which has no Relation to *their* Case. And this, surely, tho' it were ever so inconvenient on any worldly Account, rather than make so fearful a Schism in the Church, it is their Duty to do, unless they believe that the Terms of Lay-communion are sinful also. But this I don't perceive is pretended. On the contrary, Dr. Calamy himself expressly says, *The Terms of Communion with the establish'd Church are not pretended to be sinful absolutely*. All he contends for is, that they are so *respectively*, or by Reason (as I suppose he means) of present Circumstances and Conjunctures. But, surely, those Circumstances and Conjunctures must be very extraordinary that can justify such a Schism, upon account of Things which, all the while, are confessed to be *materially* lawful. At this rate, they may make any Thing, or whatever they please, unlawful. For 'tis only saying, that in regard to Circumstances and Conjunctures (which Imagination will easily frame and invent) or by reason of the Temper of the present Times, the State of Things or Disposition of Persons, they hold it necessary or very adviseable to oppose it. And when it is once thought adviseable to resist and oppose it, complying with it, be sure, will soon be a Crime, and presently commence *respectively* sinful.

In the Enquiry, therefore, whether the present Separation be justifiable, I look upon all to be impertinent, and quite foreign to the Business in hand, that does not, or is not pretended to shew, that the Church requires, as Terms of Communion, of the Laity, something that is sinful. And would your Ministers proceed in this way, let them write on, in the Name of God, and spare not. But heaping together a few Matters which are only,
perhaps,

perhaps, inconvenient, or of small Use, but are not pretended to be sinful, or any way destructive of Salvation, and proposing *them* to the People, as a sufficient Ground for their Separation, is a most *unreasonable*, an *unscriptural*, and *uncatholic* Proceeding. It is not enough, to say, there are in the Church some Defects, some Abuses have grown up in it, and *this* and *that* might have been ordered better than it is. This may, possibly, be the Case, in some few Particulars, in our Church, as, doubtless, it is in all other Churches, and, among *them*, in your *own*. And if it be, you are welcome to use your Endeavours, that those Defects may be supplied, or Irregularities reformed. But, for God's Sake, Sir, let it be in a Christian and peaceable way, I mean, with keeping in the Communion of the Church ; and that, I'll venture to say, would afford you greater Opportunities and Advantages, and give you more Power and Influence than you can now possibly have for bringing about the Regulations you desire, and, in all likelihood, be, at last, if they are fit and reasonable, a Means to effect them. But whether those Things be ever regulated, or not, People are not to be taught, that a few such Matters will justify your Separation in God's Sight. This Doctrine, I must take the Liberty to say, is *false* and *dangerous*. And to teach it is just the same Thing, as if you were to collect and put together some of the common Errors and Miscarriages of Government, or a few unequal and inconvenient Laws, and make a Book of them, and then call it, *A Vindication of your withdrawing your Allegiance from his Majesty, and taking up Arms against him*.

That the accumulating small Defects and Irregularities, (often only *imaginary* ones) is your common and most approved Way of attacking our

Church, and justifying your Separation from it, is evident from your Books, and particularly, from your *Plain Reasons for Dissenting from the Communion of the Church of England*. This is the Way and Manner of that Book, which, nevertheless, by the many Impressions it has had, one may easily judge is approved by the Body of Dissenters, as a just Vindication of your Dissention. The supercilious Ignorance of its Author, in divers Particulars, has been properly chastised, and sufficiently exposed in a small Pamphlet lately published. Several of his Reasons I have already retorted upon yourselves; but there is yet one which I have, methinks, a great Inclination to take some Notice of here, tho', perhaps, it may be out of Place, as I have given you, before, some hopes of having made an End, and said the utmost I could against you. For we Letter-writers, Sir, have a Privilege, which I have, at this Time, a mind to claim, of setting down our Thoughts as they offer themselves, without scrupulously adhering to strict and close Method. He has then (I say) one Reason which it may be proper to take Notice of, because it labours under the same Misfortune with those I have before been considering, being *weak* in itself, and yet, with the *little Force* it has, *recoiling* upon the Reasoner's Head.—*We leave* (says he) *the Communion of the Church of England, because, it has often shewn a persecuting Spirit*. 'Tis well, he can't say, it has shewn a *dividing* Spirit, and *actually divided* itself, by an open Schism, from a sound Part of the *Catholic Church*, and that, too, established by all the Authority in being. That indeed, would have been an unanswerable Reason for your Dissenting, worth all the rest in his Book. But what intelligent Christian, or sensible Man would ever say, that its *having often shewn a persecuting Spirit*

Spirit was a *plain Reason* for your Dissenting from it? Did the Church persecute, at any Time, its own Members? Were you, or your Fathers ever persecuted, while they continued in the Church? And were they driven out of it by those Persecutions? Was their being persecuted, the *Cause* of their Separation, and not rather the *Effect* and *Consequence* thereof? Or is it meant, that its having, in *former Times*, persecuted *others*, was a sufficient Cause for *your* leaving it *now*? Its having been *formerly* severe upon those that are *without*, is that a Reason why those who are *now within*, should go out, and forsake its Communion? I take upon me, Sir, absolutely to deny, that its being *now* (if it really was) of a persecuting Spirit, or its *actual* Persecution, *at this very Time*, of any, is a sufficient Ground for any one's renouncing its Communion; nor would I renounce the Communion of the very Church of *Rome*, solely on account of its Persecutions, great and many as they *have been*, or may *now* be, and if its manifold Idolatries, and other Terms of Communion, downright sinful, which it imposes upon *all*, *Laity* as well as *Clergy*, did not oblige me to it. But our Churches having *formerly* (if it ever did) *persecuted* any, when it is not pretended to do so *now*, has not so much as the *Shew* of a good Reason for Dissenting. But let it be thought, Sir, as good an one as you please, since it is *equally good*, nay, truly, *better*, against your *own* Churches, whether called *Presbyterian*, or *Independent*: For each of these discovered, in the Day of their Power, as much, and, indeed, more, of that Spirit. There is not the least Appearance of *our* Church's having disquieted and oppressed any, on account of Religion, for more, now, than half a Century; and it has given thereby good Proof, that it is not *now*, whatever it may have been *heretofore*, of a *persecuting*

cating Spirit. And tho' many Individuals among you are, doubtless, averse, equally perhaps, with yourself, or with the Church of *England*, to all manner of Persecution, yet we cannot be sure the same Christian and equitable Spirit would appear in *your Churches*, acting *collectively*, on any Occasion where they should have full Scope to shew *what Manner of Spirit they were of.* The Presumption, I think, lies rather *against* them, and will lie, 'till they get uppermost again, and have thereby an Opportunity to *let their Moderation be known to all Men.* — So, Sir, you see, this Reason is not only *as strong*, but really *stronger* against Communion with *your Churches*, than with *ours.*

I protest to you, Sir, I cannot but marvel, that these Gentlemen are not more afraid to scatter among you such Reasons (and, I suppose, they are the best they have) for dissenting, as, with the least turn of Thought, may be employed against themselves. This, surely, is great Temerity, or very unwise Management, unless it may be supposed they are so well acquainted with the stubborn Prejudices of their People, that they can safely rely upon them, and be assured, that whatever Reasons shall be offered them they will *accept as good*, without giving themselves the Trouble to sift and examine them, or view them in any other Light than they shall think proper to place them in. But for my own Part, I don't think you are all such Folks, and hope better Things of many of you. And as we are told by Monsieur *Pascal* of a certain Free-thinking Gentleman, saying to one of his Infidel Companions, *If you dispute at this rate*, you'll certainly make me a *Christian*, so, if these Gentlemen, your Ministers, *reason* at this rate, in Support of your Separation, I shall have great Hopes they will make not only *you*, but many others, good Churchmen.

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For indeed, Sir, I am greatly mistaken, if I have not shewn, that their great and most popular Reasonings in the Defence of it, are frivolous and insufficient, and if now, at last, they appear so to *you*, Conformity, you must own, will be your Duty. If you think I have *failed* in *this* Part, and that your Objections, notwithstanding all I have said, are still good; yet, if you judge I have succeeded in the other Part, if you now find your Objections pinch yourselves, as much as *us*, if you plainly perceive (as now I hope you do) there are in *your* Churches, Inexpediences for Inexpediences, Defects for Defects, Blemishes for Blemishes, Irregularities and Abuses for Abuses and Irregularities in *ours*, your Obligation to Conformity still remains. In such a Case, you can't pretend any Obligation upon Conscience to oppose the establish'd Religion, by forming Parties against it, or by withdrawing your own Submission from it, but may as well conform, as dissent. And then, there are many *external Considerations*, and *Views of public Utility* which will make it your *Duty*, and should *determine* you to do so. Your Conformity, Sir, to the establish'd Religion (*in that Case*) is but shewing a proper Deference and Respect to the Laws, and publick Wisdom of your Country. It will be adding Strength and Security to the Government (for the establish'd Religion has been always esteemed the Pillar and Support of it) and be promotive of *civil Peace*. And as the *establish'd* is also the *general* Religion, embraced and professed by *the vast Majority of the People*, your falling in and complying with *that* will be pursuing the truest, the surest and most effectual, as well as the most compendious Way for the restoring and establishing *Christian Peace* and Unity among us. It will be doing *your* Part towards putting an End to those Divisions that
have

64 *The third Letter concerning the; &c.*

have so long troubled us, and bringing about that happy Union among us, which all good Christians and Protestants so ardently wish for, and pant after: These Considerations, which are of great Moment, I leave, Sir, upon your Mind, and earnestly commend you to God's Holy Guidance and Direction.

I am, Sir,

Your most Humble Servant,

*Nayland,
April, 19th 1745.*

JOHN WHITE.

A N

APPENDIX,

C O N T A I N I N G

SOME CONSIDERATIONS on the Lawfulness, Expediency and Necessity of requiring all who are to be admitted to the Ministry, or to any Ecclesiastical Preferment in the Church of *England*, or to be Preachers or Teachers in any Dissenting Congregation to subscribe the Articles of Faith and Religion.

And setting forth

The Inconsistencies between the notorious Practises of Dissenters, and the avowed Principles of *many* of them touching that Matter.

A P P E N D I X.

IN the *Second and Third Letters to a Gentleman Dissenting from the Church of England*, I have been retorting the most popular Reasons of Dissenters against Conformity, upon themselves. But because Subscription, (I mean *simple* Subscription without regard to the Matter of it) altho^g grievously exclaimed against by *many* Dissenters, is not *yet* alledged (so far as I know) by any Dissenting Writer, as a Reason against so much as Ministerial, and much less against Lay-Conformity to the Church, I thought it would be proper to reserve the Consideration of their practical Contradictions to their own Principles touching this Matter, to a Place by itself. And I have done it the rather, because what I have to offer upon this Head will not affect *all* the Dissenters, but only *a Part* of them, as will appear, in the Sequel, more at large. After premising, therefore, some Things concerning the Lawfulness, the Expediency, and Necessity of Subscription to Articles of Religion, required of those who would be received into the Ministry, I shall represent the professed Principles and Sentiments of *divers* Dissenters concerning that Matter, shewing that they esteem it a most unwarrantable Thing, and yet, at the same Time submit, and do, of their own accords, other Things that are tantamount to it.

We hear, at every turn, of the Unreasonableness and intolerable Harshness of such Subscription, and how barbarous it is *to stretch the Consciences of Men to the Length of our own Notions*. This, we must know, is an ingenious Allusion to the famous

Story of the *Attic* Robber. And, in good truth, it was an unhandsome thing to serve Strangers in the Manner they say he did. But if, instead of *dragging* them to his Bed, and *forcing* them to lie in it, and then cutting or stretching them to the Length of it, he had provided for them a great Variety of Beds, and bid every Man chuse for himself, according to his Stature, and take his Rest, he had never been the Theme and Execration of School-Boys, but would have passed in the World, and been transmitted down to us, for a most friendly and hospitable Person. And if any, out of a foolish Ambition to lie in the richest Bed, while there were others *as* warm, and *more* easy, should *secretly*, and *without the Knowledge of his Host*, either *lop*, or *stretch*, and put himself to *Torture*, to make himself *even* with it, he could only have blamed his own Folly. The Application of this is mighty easy. We have in *England* Religions good store; and if the Established does not suit the Size and Fashion of any ones Conscience, he is at Liberty to accommodate himself with another that may suit it better. But if, for covetous or ambitious Ends, he *will needs* be promoted in the establish'd Church, and for that End, *will* violate and give a *secret* Wound to his Conscience by *fraudulent* Subscriptions, I know not whom he should blame but himself. I hope, *not* the Church, which he thus infamously deceives, and imposes upon by his Prevarication.

Sometimes we are ask'd, what Directions there are in Scripture concerning Ministers subscribing Articles of Faith, and what Warrant and Authority we have *there* for such a Practise. Why, the Scriptures require Ministers *to take heed to their Doctrine, to shew Uncorruptness in it, and to hold the Mystery of Faith in a good Conscience*; and that the Church may have some Assurance of their doing so, or-
dain

dain, that they be *first proved*, and then admitted to their Office, *being found blameless*, 1 Tim. iii. 10. where the Apostle plainly intimates, and even enjoins some Trial and Probation of those who are to be advanced to the Ministry, as well in reference to their *holding the Mystery of Faith*, as to their keeping a *good Conscience*. But the Form and Method of Probation not being determined, that is evidently left to the Determinations of human Prudence, and the Discretion of Church Governours. And then, the Subscription-way, I guess, may be as *prudently* taken, as any other. The Church of *England* has chosen this way: The Church of *Scotland* has done the same, obliging all, not only before they are ordained, but before they are licensed to pray and preach as Probationers, to sign the *Westminster Confession*; and all the Protestant Churches beyond the Seas prove the Faith of their Candidates for the Ministry, either by Subscriptions, or solemn Oaths, or both, which they repeat, upon divers Occasions. And some of these, particularly those of *France*, had got far beyond us in the Matter of Subscription, and carried it to other-guise Heights than is done here, as whoever will turn over Mr. *Quick's Synodicon* will plainly see. And if Subscription was no way founded on the Word of God, it is plainly dictated by common Sense, which cries loudly, that the Church has a Right to demand it, and that none need make any Scruple to comply with it. For what is more evident to common Sense than this, that *those to whom the Depositum of the Christian Faith is committed should be themselves sound in the Faith, and give proper Evidence of their being so to those who are to put that Trust into their Hands*; and this again, that *none need make any Difficulty to subscribe with their Hands what they really believe with their Hearts*.

As to the Expediency and Necessity of such Subscription, that is as great and evident as the Expediency and Necessity of preserving the Honour and Reputation of the Church, and the Purity of Religion, by preventing Diversity of Opinions. For if Subscription to Creeds and Forms of Orthodoxy was once laid aside, if the Doors of the Church were set wide open, and all that would, only owning the Scriptures to be the Word of God, might be admitted to her Ministry, that glorious Confusion Infidels pant after would come on a-pace, and Christianity, without their Help, would be soon writ and preach'd out of the World. Every Parish might have a System of Divinity peculiar to itself, nay, there might be divers in the same Parish. The Doctor, in the Morning, would teach his People *Orthodoxy*, and the Afternoon Preacher give them a Lecture of rank *Arianism*. The next Lord's Day a Disciple of *Socinus* finds Means to get into the Pulpit, and undertakes to confute both; and then, one after another, twenty Species besides of Hereticks or Enthusiasts, for whom, at present, we have no Names, shall mount it, to give Vent to some Peculiarities of their own. This is the blessed State of Religion which a promiscuous and undistinguishing Admittance into the sacred Ministry of all Persons, who still believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, would introduce. Great Joy for Infidels and Libertines! It might, possibly, bring some of these Folks, now and then, to Church (as they go to the Bear-Garden) meerly for Sport and Pastime. But those who are serious would have no Heart to go thither, and might think it better to stay at Home, mourn in Secret, and try to discover what is *true Religion and undefiled before God*, in their own Closets. And Men of weak Judgments would be in Danger of turning
Scepticks,

Scepticks, or of going over to downright Infidelity. This indeed might not immediately be the Case, tho' all Subscriptions were to be *now* removed. For the present Clergy, 'tis like, and I do believe, would be, in general, the same Men that they are *now*. But when *these* are gone off the Stage, and succeeded by others, who may differ, perhaps, as much in their Principles and Beliefs, as they do in their Countenances, then is the Time we may expect to taste the Fruits of this hopeful Scheme of Liberty.

I have not complimented, I hope, the present Clergy above what they deserve. For tho' it is said, some of them do indulge themselves in an unwarrantable Latitude of thinking, and have fallen away from the Catholick Faith which they have formerly subscribed to, I am persuaded there are not many of this Sort. Such as there are, 'tis like, if all Forms of Subscription that stand in their way, were removed, would, by Degrees, throw off their Disguises, and shew themselves, in their publick Administrations and Instructions, quite other Sort of Men, than they may now, possibly, appear to be. But as Things are at present, they will not commonly take the Boldness, in the Face of their Parishes, and in open Contradiction to their recorded Subscriptions, (which they may, and, perhaps, hope, they shall have Occasion to repeat) and to those Forms which they are daily using, to oppose the received Faith. At least, they will hardly do it by *positive and express Negatives, by open avowed Attacks*, but only by *dark and doubling Expressions, distant Innuendos, and consequential Arguments*, which as they will pass unobserved by Nineteen in Twenty of their Hearers, will not give that great and general Offence I have been just before representing. This was the Way of a late learned Doctor in his Sermons. *There are many Sentences*
scattered

scattered throughout setting forth, or implying Arianism, as his Right Reverend Editor observes. But had it not been for Creeds and certain Forms of Prayer he was muzzled with, instead of *Sentences scattered*, up and down, *implying Arianism*, we should have had, in all likelihood, *Arianism professed*, and he would have been, in his Discourses from the Pulpit, as unreserved, as he is in his Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity, and other Writings. In fine, if ever these Checks and Restraints shall be taken off, such Offences will come oftener from the Pulpit, and grow, gradually, more and greater, as the present Clergy wear away; and the Press, in concert with the Pulpit, will daily groan with new and strange Doctrines, as it has done, of late, with Harangues against Creeds, and Subscription to them.

There is Reason to believe the far greater Part of these have flowed from the Pens of Dissenters; and some doubtless have come from the Infidel Quarter. I am ready to do many Dissenters the Justice to own, that, as they hold to sound and Catholick Principles, in Opposition to the Heresies now prevailing, so they are no *Enemies* to, but have been good *Advocates* for Creeds and Subscriptions to them against their own Brethren. But if we believe the Gentlemen of this latter Sort, subscribing the Doctrines of Christianity in any Form of Words of Man's devising, is *discrediting the Perfection of the Holy Scriptures, and throwing Dirt upon them, undermining the Principles of the Reformation, and laying the Foundation of Popery, an Encroachment upon Christian Liberty, encouraging Impositions, setting up a Tyrannical Power, and even an Inquisition in the Church, nor can Truth and Peace be preserved* (as one or two of them wildly say) *'till this Engine of the Devil be overthrown.* This and a great deal more

more in the like Strain, may be found in the Writings of Non-Subscribers, with which the World swarmed somewhat above twenty Years ago, during the famous Controversy about the Trinity. And the Non-Subscribers, unless I am greatly mistaken, were a good Majority of the *London* Ministers. Whether they were, before that Time, of these Principles, or took them up, *as convenient at that critical Juncture*, to screen themselves from any further Enquiry into their Faith, which might have ended in their being deprived of their publick Ministerial Usefulness, their Brethren for the Subscription, must be allowed to be the best Judges. But I who know them no otherwise than by such of their Writings as have happened to fall into my Hands, am willing to embrace the former Opinion, as the most charitable, *viz.* that these, all along, were their settled Principles, and that they writ, at that Time, no otherwise of these Matters, than they were always used to think of them.

Who, now, would think any other, than that *these Gentlemen* ordain *their* Ministers, without asking any Questions about their Opinions and Beliefs? Who would not suppose, that they take in *all*, whatever Principles they are known to be of, or tho' nothing of their Principles be known more than this, that they are Christians? If I were to take it into *my* Head to become a Pastor to one of their Congregations, where my Principles were well known, might not I fairly expect not to be rejected, on those Accounts? And yet, if I should reckon upon *that*, I am afraid I should soon find I had reckoned wrong, and flattered myself too much. It runs strangely in my Head, I should stand but a bad Chance, and find it an up-hill Business to mount one of their Pulpits, with the Weight of all my *Liturgical, Prelatical, Catholick* Principles about me.

And if another was to offer himself to them, but, at the same Time, was resolved to keep his Principles to himself, and let them know of him no more than that he believed the Bible to be the Word of God, and all it contains to be true, could he reasonably suppose he should *not* be accepted? and yet I fancy he must *open* himself a little more than this comes to, before the Doors of the Meeting will be *open* to him. They will certainly demand, and he must give them, before he is admitted, some farther Proof and Evidence of his Orthodoxy. And if an *innocent Error* about the *Trinity* or *Incarnation* should chance to be no Bar to his Preferment, nor make him less acceptable to the People, yet there are other Points of more favourite Importance wherein it will be expected he should be found *orthodox*. He must be an *Arminian*, to please some; an *Anti-Arminian*, and very staunch in the five Points, to be accepted of others. And I have been informed of a Congregation who were used to be called Presbyterians, the Heads of which, upon losing their Minister, who, it seems, for being an *Arminian*, had not been very acceptable to them, said among themselves — *They must now have an Independent, for the Presbyterians were not sound.*

Supposing, however, he gets in, and fancying himself well settled in his Congregation, begins to publish, either in Print, or Preaching, or Conversation, some Opinions that are distasteful to them; in such a Case, 'tis a Chance, if they are not for trying to eject him, and put another in his Place who shall come up to their own Standard; and some of the Orthodox Ministers in the Neighbourhood shall be called in to give a Sanction to their doings. We hear, at every Turn, of some Cases of this sort, and are often obliged with *Faithful Narratives* thereof.

That

That they are not such Enemies to all *inquisitory Forms of Tryal*, as, from some of their Writings, they may seem to be, is pretty evident from the Care that is previously taken to be rightly informed of the Faith and Principles of their Candidates for the Ministry. It should seem, by some Passages I have met with in their Writings, that these are regularly examined, not only as to their Learning, but to their Soundness also in the Faith. And Doctor Calamy, in his *short Account of Protestant Dissenters in England*, tells us; *they make, before they are solemnly ordained, a publick Confession of that Faith in which they engage to make it their Business to instruct others.* And this Confession of their Faith we often see accompany the Ordination Sermon, when it is published. I don't mightily like the Way. For, in these Forms, many Points of the greatest Importance *may* be omitted, and, probably, *often are.* And they *may* be drawn up in such general, such sliding, evasive, and equivocating Terms, as shall impose upon the Congregation, and the Ordainer too, at only one hearing. And that this is not a mere Fancy and groundless Suggestion, appears from a Book, entitled, *An Answer to Mr. Pierce's Western Inquisition*, p. 27, 28, 40. where we are told of no less than five or six Gentlemen, all mentioned by Name, *who seeming very sound as to the Doctrine of the Trinity, in the Confessions they made, at their Ordinations, afterwards appeared of different Sentiments, to the great Grief of several of their Ordainers, and that, this Practise of Equivocation has been the Cause of most of the Trouble and Difficulty that the Ministers have laboured under.* By this we may plainly see, that their Method to prove the Faith of their Ministers is not so wise and effectual to answer the End, as Subscription to certain and well known Forms. But be

that as it will ; for that is not the Point I am now upon : But I am only observing, that they do impose, upon all Persons to be Ordained, this Test of their Faith and Orthodoxy. I ask now, Are not these Confessions of Faith *Human Explications* ? Are they not *Forms of Mens devising* ? Are they *expressed in the Words of Scripture, and in them only* ? Every body sees they are not. Do they not contain many Points, besides the Scriptures being written by Inspiration of God ? And is there any Difference (I mean as to the Iniquity of the Thing) between giving in, or pronouncing publickly a Confession of their Faith of their own composing, or, possibly, transcribed from others, and subscribing to one offered by the Church ? If there be, pray tell me, wherein lies the Innocency of the one, and wherein the Iniquity of the other ?

There is one Gentleman of great Name among the Dissenters, and he is Mr. *Chandler*, who seems to have the most frightful Notions of Subscription of any Writer I have yet met with. In his Account, it is not only an *unreasonable Thing*, but *pernicious to the Church of God, infamous in its Nature, unjust, Antichristian*, and almost every Thing that is bad. Now I would enquire, if he has never been concerned in the Ordination of any ; and if he has, whether he did not exact such Confessions of the Ordained, but laid Hands on them, *suddenly*, upon their making only a *general Declaration of their believing the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, and consenting to the Doctrine of Christ, as therein delivered*. I would enquire too, if he himself did not make such a Confession of *his* Faith, when *he* was ordained. I have Reason to think he did ; because I find Dr. *Calamy*, who says, as before mentioned, *their young Men who are Candidates for the Ministry, before they are ordained, make a*
Con-

Confession of their Faith, was the Ordainer of Mr. S. Chandler, whom I suppose to be the Gentleman I am now writing of. And he, to be sure, would not neglect what he says was the constant Practice of their Churches. And indeed I observe that the Doctor, in the Charge delivered to him, takes Notice, *that he had taken of him all fitting Precautions, as to his future Conduct, by certain Promises he made about a few necessary Things*. Here we have Mr. Chandler engaging himself, by certain Promises about some necessary Things, besides (I presume) the Scriptures being the Word of God, at his entring upon the Ministry, and to qualify himself for it. And 'tis Pity those Promises, and these necessary Things were not made publick, that we might have known what they were, how few, how many, and how necessary, which, in all likelihood, would have shewn, in a strong Light, the Inconsistency of this Gentleman's avowed Principles with his Practice.

So then, upon the whole of the Matter, they, too, with all their Pretences to Liberty, have an *Inquisition* of their own, (for so, I think, they have christned all Forms of Tryal concerning the Faith of Ministers) and which all of them, Subscribers and Non-Subscribers, so far as appears, have agreed to submit to, in order to explore the Consciences, to sift out the Faith of all Aspirants to the Ministry, and be secure of it.

But they not only exact ^t Confessions of Faith,

^t They not only exact Confessions of Faith of their Candidates for the Ministry, but something of that Sort of all Communicants, unless Mr. Dorrington, who *should know* what their Practices are, has misinformed us. He says, They require of them who come to the Lord's Supper a Confession of their Faith, which must be given to the Pastor at least, and perhaps before some of the ruling Elders of the Church. So that, as great Enemies as they would seem to be to all Tests of Orthodoxy, when in their ill Humour they are writing against the Establish'd Church for which

(which are all one with Subscriptions, saving only in Point of external Form) from their Ministers, at their Ordination, but in Obedience to the Laws, do actually subscribe the Articles, just as we do, to qualify themselves for officiating in any Congregation for the Exercise of Religion. This, I dare say, is not generally known. It is commonly supposed that the Creeds and Articles of the Church of *England* are subscribed only by the Clergy of the Church of *England*. But be it known to all the People of *Great-Britain*, that there is not, in the Kingdom, one Dissenting Minister, who has complied with the Terms of the Toleration, but has solemnly subscribed the Articles, bating three or four, which they are excused from subscribing, by reason the subject Matter of them is contrary to the profest Principles of Dissenters, and has also subscribed the three Creeds, (yes, the *Athanasian*, as well as the other) *that they ought thoroughly to be received, and believed, and may be proved by most certain Warrants of Holy Scripture.* The Act of Toleration (I have put in the ^u Margin the enacting Clause) expressly requires

imposing them, their own very Laity are not exempt from them.

^u And be it farther enacted, by the Authority aforesaid, That no Person Dissenting from the Church of *England* in holy Orders, or pretending to holy Orders, nor any Preacher or Teacher of any Congregation of Dissenting Protestants that shall make and subscribe the Declaration aforesaid, and take the said Oaths at the General or Quarter Sessions of the Peace to be held for the County, Town, Parts or Division where such Person lives, which Court, is hereby impowered to Administer the same, and shall also declare his Approbation of and subscribe the Articles of Religion mentioned in the Statute made in the 13th Year of the Reign of the late Queen *Elizabeth*, except the 34th, 35th, and 36th and these Words of the 20th Article, *viz.* [“ The Church has Power to “ decree Rites and Ceremonies and Authority in Controversies of “ Faith, and yet”] shall be liable to any of the Pains or Penalties mentioned in an Act made the 17th Year of the Reign of King *Charles*

requires of *them* such Subscription, as a Condition of their being exempted from the Pains and Penalties of some former Acts; and they do, it is to be supposed, as the Law requires. And yet these Gentlemen, all the while, are writing, with as much Freedom, or with as noble and generous a Warmth, as they, doubtless, will call it, against Subscription, as if *they* were under no manner of Obligation to subscribe, and did nothing at all of that Nature.

They say, and ^w Mr. *Chandler*, in particular, says, *Subscriptions have ever been a Grievance in the Church of God.* And, doubtless, the making a Confession of their Faith, at their Ordinations, just in the Manner that they now, of themselves, do, would have been, too, a *Grievance*, if it had been required by Law. But is it not an Iniquity, too, in his, and their Judgments? A *mere* Grievance *may*, and *ought*, in some Cases, to be submitted to. But will they submit to a confessed Iniquity? Why, really they do. In their *Reasons*

Charles the 2d, entitled “An Act for restraining Non-Conformists from inhabiting in Corporations,” nor the Penalties mentioned in the aforesaid Act made in the two and twentieth Year of his said late Majesty’s Reign or or by Reason of such Persons preaching at any Meeting for the Exercise of Religion; nor to the Penalty of one hundred Pounds mentioned in an Act made in the 13th and 14th of King *Charles* the second, entitled, “An Act for the Uniformity of publick Prayers and Administration of Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies; and for establishing the Form of making, ordaining and consecrating of Bishops, Priests and Deacons in the Church of *England*,” for officiating in any Congregation for the Exercise of Religion permitted and allowed by this Act.

Provided always, that the making and subscribing the said Declaration and taking the said Oaths, and making the Declaration of Approbation and Subscription to the said Articles, in manner as aforesaid, by every respective Person, or Persons herein before-mentioned, at such General or Quarter Sessions of the Peace, as aforesaid, shall be then and there entered of Record at the said Court, &c. &c.

^w *History of Persecution*, p. 428.

for not subscribing the Paper offered at Salters-Hall, they say, *The Subscription there insisted on is beyond even what the Legislature itself requires of us. For the Legislature has thought fit to require only our once subscribing; and this being made a necessary Condition of exercising our Ministry, we should be highly blameable to neglect that Work, by refusing to comply with what is required of us, when we can do it with a safe Conscience. But we have always thought that human Declarations of Faith were far from being eligible, on their own Account. And in a Post-script to their Advices, they farther say, In some Points, and in some Cases, we may, no doubt, submit to legal Demands, when yet we ought, by no means, to countenance it, where there is no Pretence of Authority. Here indeed, where they are speaking of their own Subscribing to our Articles of Religion, they speak somewhat tenderly against Subscription. 'Tis only said of it, that 'tis far from being eligible on its own Account, and what ought, by no means, to be countenanced; which, yet, plainly imports, that they esteem it a wrong and unwarrantable thing. But, at other Times, when their subscribing is not thought of, or there is no Occasion to make mention of it, they run riot upon it, representing it (as I before observed) as a giving up of their Christian Liberty, throwing Dirt upon the Scriptures, and sapping the Foundations of the Reformation. Yet, all this, it seems, they can do with a safe Conscience, when Law and Authority require it, and they can't exercise their Ministry without it. Nay, they should think themselves highly blameable, if they were to refuse it. These Principles, methinks, would as well justify or excuse their Ministerial Conformity to the Church of England. For, in that Case, it would be only saying, that "tho' subscribing the Liturgy, and*
" doing

“ doing some other Things as necessary Conditions
 “ of exercising our Ministry are *far from being*
 “ *eligible on their own Accounts, and ought, by all*
 “ *Means, to be discountenanced*, yet, as they are
 “ *legally demanded*, they may be complied with,
 “ *with a safe Conscience, and we should be highly*
 “ *blameable to neglect the Work of the Ministry, by*
 “ *refusing to comply with what is required of us.*”

These are your sound and judicious Casuists! These your consistent Protestants! These your Friends of Liberty! Strange! that Gentlemen, who, in other Cases are so fond of Liberty, as to declare, they will not submit to any Terms of Communion that are *legally demanded*, and hold it sinful to comply with such Things as they own to be *indifferent* in their Natures, *because they are imposed by Authority*, should, in this Case, comply with what they declare to be *unjustifiable*, and *infamous* in its Nature, *because Authority imposes it*.

Quo teneam vultus mutantem Protea nodo ?

’Tis true, this is done to preserve their supposed Usefulness, and *that good may come on’t*. But this will sound strangely in all Christian and Protestant Ears. And therefore, ’tis hoped, if they can’t alter their Principles, they will their Practices, and if they continue of Opinion, that subscribing is such an unwarrantable Thing, they will openly refuse it. But if they can’t be brought to do *that*, the next wisest Thing they can do is, to *subscribe and hold their Tongues*, and say not a Syllable about it.

This writing against Subscription with Subscribing at the same Time, appears to me a most surprising Procedure. It is a perfect Riddle ; and one knows not how to unfold it, unless it can be done by the Supposition of a *double Doctrine*, a *vulgar* and a *secret* Theology, the former to be *delivered*

out among the People, the latter to be kept in for the Use and Instruction of a select Number, such as are initiated into their Mysteries. And as the antient Sages (unless Mr. Warburton be mistaken) used to inculcate upon the People certain Principles and Doctrines which they did not believe themselves, *for their Utility*, because they were necessary to support a Civil Establishment, so *these*, it may be thought, scatter Prejudices among our People against Subscription for their Tendency to overthrow a Religious one, all the while keeping up a regard to them *among themselves*, that so, they may preserve some tolerable Order, Unity, and Purity in their own Churches. If this be their Policy, 'tis certainly right, and I cannot but commend them for being so *wise in their Generations*. For the Exemption of the Clergy from all Obligation to subscribe (if they could but prevail to obtain it for us) would be as proper an Engine as can ever be employed for the Subversion of the Establish'd Church, which seems to have been *the Thing in View*, for some past Years.

I shall dismiss this Subject, after remarking one or two Things concerning the Conduct of the Gentleman before mentioned, in his *History of Persecution*, in regard to the Cause now before us. In that Book he has thought fit to bestow a whole Chapter (which he seems to think no Digression from his Subject) against Subscription. But all the Way, speaks of it as a slavish and corrupt Practice, which the Church and her Clergy alone had any concern in. *The Clergy* (says he p. 432) *of the Church of England are bound to subscribe the XXXIX Articles*. Is there any Difference between Subscribing XXXIX and XXXV Articles and a Half, as all the Dissenting Ministers are obliged to do? But not a single Syllable is said, nor the least Hint

Hint given, here or elsewhere, that I can find, of *that*. And so, all the Imputations he was about fastening upon Subscription were to fall, in their full Weight, upon the Church only. Is it possible to think that a Gentleman of his confessed Acuteness and Capacity could write a Chapter against Subscription, of twelve or thirteen Pages, (besides what he has scattered, up and down, in his Book) without calling to Mind, that he and his Brethren were concerned, as well as we, in this Affair of Subscription, and as much interested in the Defence and Justification of it? If the Reader is so charitably disposed as to think he *might*, and probably *did* do so, I am content. But for my own Part, as I should be loth to be found deficient in *real* Charity, so I would not be willingly remarked for a *fulsome Affectation* of it; and, therefore, make no Difficulty to declare, that, to me, it does not seem likely, that *such a Man* as Mr. Chandler, who seems (it must be said) pretty much awake, whenever he sets Pen to Paper, should be so very unreflecting, as not once, from Beginning to End, to call it to remembrance, that he, and his Brethren were Subscribers, as well as we. I should rather think it would be continually running in his Head, and he would not know how to get it out.

Then again, not content with loading the Clergy with the Charge of *mere* subscribing, (which, in his Opinion, is heavy enough) he *will* have it, that their Subscriptions are *fraudulent* and *evasive*. It must be, (he says Pag. 435) by *some such Evasions* (as he had before mentioned) *that Arians subscribe to Athanasian Creeds, and Arminians to Principles of rigid Calvinism*. This the Clergy have been, *again and again, reproached with, even by the Enemies of Christianity*. Yes, we know it, the Enemies of Christianity and the Writers on the Dissenting Side have

have commonly, of late Days, joined together, in their Reproaches and Praises of the same Persons. *And I am sorry to say it* (continues he) *they have not been able to wipe off the Scandal from themselves.* Did he not now know, or did he forget, or, I ask again, would he have had it been *concealed*, that the Dissenting Ministers, *who are all Subscribers*, are, some of *them*, Arians (more, I dare say, in Proportion) and many of them *Arminians* (if they must be so called) as well as our Clergy? And have they *been able to wipe off the Reproach of Subscribing Athanasian* (as he, with Mr. Whiston loves to call them, instead of *Catholic*) Principles, and rigid *Calvinistic* ones, if indeed our Articles were such? In another Place, p. 69, he asks, *Do all the Clergy really believe, that the Fault and Corruption of the Nature of every Man does in every Person born into the World deserve God's Wrath and Damnation, that we have no Power to do good Works acceptable to God, without the Grace of God by Christ preventing us; that Works done without the Inspiration of the Spirit are not pleasant to God, yea, that they have the Nature of Sin.* Or rather, *do not the Generality of those who subscribe them, if they put any Sense upon them at all, draw them a little aside, and put their own Comment upon them?* — Not that he knows; or, if they do, the Dissenting Ministers may be supposed to do the same. For *he* and every body knows, these are no distinguishing Points between Churchmen and Dissenters, and the one is as like as the other to be dissatisfied about them. And that Mr. Chandler knows *one* Dissenter, at least, who *really is* so, and when he subscribed them, *if he put any Sense at all upon them, drew them a little aside, and put his own Comment upon them,* we have pretty good Evidence in this Place.

After all, considering the heavy Charges brought
by

by this Gentleman, and so many of his Brethren, against Subscription, it is almost uncharitable to suppose that they *do* subscribe, as by Law they are bound to do, and one would really suspect, that they *neglect* or *evade* it, and take the Benefit of the Toleration, without complying with the most essential Condition of it. — But this is a Subject too nice and delicate for my handling : And, therefore, *here* I resolve to break off, leaving the intelligent Reader for the rest to his own Reflections.

F I N I S.

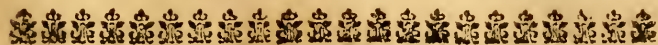


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Plain R E A S O N S for Dissenting, &c.

WHEN a Man coolly reflects upon the Disputes between the Church of *England* and those who dissent from her, carried on for so long a Time with so much Heat, and with so little Reason still subsisting; he may well be surpriz'd to find; that so much Smoke hath arisen from so little Fire : It is indeed amazing to see such Numbers zealously persisting in a Practice which apparently weakens the Protestant Cause, and is by the Laws of Christ as much condemn'd, and as plainly forbidden as any other of the least justifiable. Were we to enquire particularly from whence this comes to pass; several Reasons might be assigned for it, and amongst these I think the two which I shall mention are none of the least considerable.

One Reason of this is, because the Matter in Dispute between the Church of *England* and the Dissenters is not generally understood.

From the great Earnestness and extraordinary Zeal with which the dissenting Interest hath been maintained, it may be imagined by those who do not give themselves the Trouble of enquiring, that the Church of *England* doth teach some strange and unscriptural Doctrines. But there is no such Thing; there is no Dispute of that sort; the doctrinal Arti-

cles of the Church of *England* are allowed by the Dissenters to be true, and their Teachers do themselves subscribe them: The Dispute therefore between us and them, is wholly relating to Matters of smaller Moment, and chiefly to our Rites and Ceremonies: And this certainly ought to abate the Heat and Fury of the Dissenters, *viz.* That we do not differ about any fundamental Points, but chiefly about things in themselves of an indifferent Nature.

Now, as to these Things, it should be considered, that no Truths are plainer than these following: That if they be not sinful, then they may be conscientiously complied with; and if a Man may with a good Conscience comply with them, then it is unreasonable and sinful to separate upon their Account; because, to preserve the Peace of the Church, and to obey the Commands of lawful Authority, are certain and indispensable Duties.

This hath often been urged against the Dissenters with great Strength of Argument; and yet when they produce their Reasons, by which they would justify their Separation, what they object to us seems to be of so little Moment, as scarce to deserve a serious Answer. Dr. *Resbury* did well observe of the Dissenters Objections to this Effect; That when they were placed together, they looked as if those who brought them, were in hopes they might prevail rather by their Number than their Weight; and might act like the Articles of an Impeachment, none of which perhaps would *singly* affect the accused Person, but all together may amount to accumulative Treason.

But this Management in our Case will not be allowed by a reasonable Man; for if no one of the Conditions required by the Church of *England* is sinful, it is plain they may all be complied with; and therefore the short Question between us is this, Whether the Things which the Church of *England* requires of its Members be actually sinful or not?

For

For if they be not, the Separation is made without Reason, and cannot be defended.

As this is so plain a Question, it may very easily be resolved; for tho' it may be difficult to ascertain the exact Degrees of Sin or of Virtue, it is much easier to distinguish the one from the other. If a Thing be sinful, it may require much Judgment to consider all the aggravating Circumstances of it, and to set forth precisely how far it is sinful or otherwise: But almost any Christian may know whether what is required of him be sinful or not: If it be immoral, his own Reason will tell him so; if it be forbidden by the Revealed Word of God, he will find it forbidden in the Holy Scriptures: But if it be neither wicked in its own Nature, nor yet forbidden in the Scriptures, how can it possibly be sinful? And if it be not sinful, why may not I comply with it?

As this then is the plain Question between us and the Dissenters, it follows, that tho' we should admit that some little Things in the Practice or the Discipline of our Church might possibly be altered and amended; yet so long as we require nothing sinful, those little Defects or Blemishes (if any such there are) will not be a sufficient Ground for separating from us. As to those Things with which I am concerned in the following Pages, I hope fully to justify the Church of *England*, to the Satisfaction of the Reader: But since there are a great Number of Articles which I have to consider, and as I intend to be as short as I can conveniently, perhaps to some Persons such a Justification as I propose may not in some Points seem perfectly clear: However, if that should happen, I flatter myself I shall at least make it very evident that none of the Things objected to us do make the Conditions of our Communion sinful, which, as I have observed, is sufficient for our Purpose.

There is one who hath before been appealed to upon this Point, and his Judgment (one might expect)

pect) should have some Weight with our dissenting Brethren; and that is Calvin, who says expressly, *Wherever the Gospel is preached and reverently heard, and the Sacraments are administered, there is the true Appearance of a Church; whose Authority no Man may with Impunity despise, or reject its Admonitions, or resist its Counsels, or set at nought its Discipline; much less separate from it, and break its Unity. For so great a Regard has our Lord to the Communion of his Church, that he accounts him an Apostate from his Religion, who obstinately separates from any Christian Society which keeps up the true Ministry of the Word and Sacraments, — Altho' it be otherwise very corrupt* *. Mr. Calvin here puts this Matter much stronger than is necessary for the Defence of our Church: And it is Pity they who admire this Gentleman's Judgment in other Respects, will not likewise follow it in this. They will, if they consider that the proper Question between us and the Dissenters, is not whether any of our Usages may possibly be altered for the better? But whether the Conditions we require of our Members be sinful or not? And one Reason why these Matters have been carried so far, is, as I apprehend, because this thing is not sufficiently, if it be at all considered, by the generality of our Dissenters.

Another Reason why the Dissenters are so numerous and so zealous in their Opposition to the Church of *England*, is, because, they are much de-

* Utcunque sit, ubi reverenter auditur Evangelii prædicatio, neque Sacramenta negliguntur, illic pro eo tempore, neque fallax neque ambigua Ecclesiæ apparet facies: cujus vel Autoritatem spernere, vel Monita respuere, vel Consiliis refragari, vel Castigationes ludere, nemini impune licet: Multo minus ab ea deficere ac ejus abrumperè Unitatem. Tanti enim Ecclesiæ suæ Communionem facit Dominus, ut pro transfuga et Desertore Religionis habeat, quicumque se a qualibet Christiana Societate, quæ modo verum Verbi ac Sacramentorum Ministerium colat, contumaciter alienarit.

And afterwards speaking of the same Thing, he adds,

Etiamsi [Ecclesia scil. vel Societas illa] multis aliis Vitiis fæteat. *Job. Calv. Institut. lib. 4. c. 1. sect. 10. 12.*

ceived

ceived by their Leaders ; and by the artful Management of those, whose Interest it is to blow up the Coals and encrease our Divisions, are made to entertain such an Opinion of our Church as it doth upon no account deserve. One Method of doing this, is that of dispersing great Numbers of small Treatises contrived for that purpose ; and among the Books of this sort, the little Piece to which this is an Answer, is not to be esteemed the least pernicious.

It has been published several Years, and yet little or no notice hath been taken of it ; possibly for these Reasons ; First, because every Thing that is material in it hath long since been considered by several learned and good Men of the established Church ; and this makes an Answer to it the less necessary : And Secondly, because little Danger might be expected from *this Performance*. I was myself of the same Opinion, that it *could* do no harm, and that an Answer would only make that be more taken notice of, which otherwise of itself would soon be forgotten. But as I perceive it hath gone through so many Editions (no less than *Twenty Two*) and really is in high Esteem among several Dissenters in my Neighbourhood ; and as I have Reason to think that among the lower sort of People (those who have not an Opportunity of seeing better Books) it actually hath done much Mischief ; I have determined to consider the Reasons which this Writer gives for dissenting from the Church of *England*, and shall shew that if he hath no better than those which he mentions in this Book (and to be sure he gave us his best) then neither he, nor those who admire him, and proceed upon the same Principles, can be justified in their Separation from the National Church.

The Author of the *plain Reasons* wrote them,
 “ 1. To inform us that they do not dissent from us
 “ out of Stubbornness, or because they love Contention ; but from a tender Conscience.

“ 2. To

“ 2. To furnish well-meaning Dissenters with plain
 “ Reasons for their common Practice.” p. 1.

I write this, to shew that the tenderest Conscience ought not to lay any stress upon the things which he objects to us ; and to prevent unwary and well-meaning Persons from being led into so dangerous a Sin, as that of needlessly encreasing the Divisions of the Church, by withdrawing themselves without just Cause from our Communion : A Practice which hath brought the Reformation into greater Contempt, and unhappily weaken'd the Protestant Interest in these Kingdoms, more than any other whatsoever.

The Author of the *Reasons* hath this Advantage, that his Objections lye within a narrow Compass, but an Answer to them must take up more Room, and the larger the Answer is, the greater must be the Purchase, and consequently it will come into the fewer Hands : For this Reason I will confine myself chiefly to his ten plain Reasons, and give a more general Answer to the remaining Part of his Piece, being determin'd to make this, agreeably to the Title of it, as *short* an Answer as I conveniently can. If it should chance to fall into the Hands of any judicious Reader who is acquainted with our Disputes, he will perceive that as the Objections are old, so in general are the Answers to them : and I have sometimes chosen rather to give them in the very Words of some former Writer than in my own, not only because they express their own Thoughts much better than I can do, but also to shew the Disingenuity of the Writer I am concern'd with, who could gravely bring forth the same stale Objections, without taking the least Notice of what had been said against them.

As it is well known that the Author of the plain Reasons is a Teacher in an Independent Congregation, I might return the ill Language which he bestows upon the Clergy, and might, according to his Method, throw it upon the Dissenting Teachers in general ;

ral ; as the Reader will allow, when in the following Pages he shall see how unfairly he misrepresents some Things, and wickedly forges or perverts others, in order to blacken those from whom he dissents : But as my Design is only to inform the misguided, or those who are likely to be so, I will not take Occasion from a particular Instance to make general Reflections, nor will I use any harsher Expressions even of *this Man*, than a just Concern for Truth shall extort from me, *not rendring Evil for Evil, or Railing for Railing*, but, as the Apostle teaches, *1 Pet. iii. 9. contrariwise Blessing* ; and I pray, that it may please God to give him Grace to repent of this uncharitable and unchristian Work, and to grant him at length that pure and tender Conscience, which he already professeth to have.

The Author of the *Reasons* seems to blame the Clergy for preaching Morality, as if that was not a Part of the pure Word of God, *p. 6.* But I hope he will allow, that Lying, and Fraud and Deceit of all sorts is really sinful, and upon all accounts to be abhorred and detested by every faithful Christian : And if I can shew that this Author is guilty of such Practices, and doth endeavour to deceive and impose upon his Readers, even in a Book where he extols the *Tenderness of his Conscience* in the most minute Matters of Religion, then his Admirers must grant, there is Reason for them to alter their Opinion of him, and that they should lay no Stress upon his Assertions, where he doth not support them with good Proof.

This Piece is written in such a rambling Manner, and, what Argument there is in it, is mixed with so many uncharitable Aspersions and notorious Untruths, occasionally thrown in to prejudice the Reader against the Clergy, that it is very difficult, if not impracticable to give it a regular Answer : An Instance of this we have in his first Reason ; for after objecting to us that the Church of *England* is not so
pure

pure a Church as some others are, he runs away to the Right which the People are said to have of choosing their own Minister as they do their Physician, (and this is the Subject of his eighth Reason;) after which, he charges the Clergy with perverting the common meaning of the Word *ἐκκλησία* and insinuates that they make their People think it signifies the Place of Worship, and not the Congregation assembled therein. Now this I beg leave to deny, and I challenge him to produce any good Writer of the Church of *England* who asserts this; so that he might have saved himself the Trouble of bringing those Texts of Scripture to fix the common Meaning of a Word which no Body will dispute with him; but still these Things, thus occasionally thrown in, do answer his Purpose; for they prejudice an ignorant Reader, and do divert him from attending to the Argument he is upon: and therefore in shewing the Insufficiency of his Reasons, I shall collect his Argument (if I can) in its full Force, then urge what I have to say against that, and afterwards take some Notice of his Occasional Reflections.

Nevertheless, though no Part of our Controversy depends at all upon this Point, it may be worth our Author's while to consider 1 *Cor.* xi. 18. 20. 22. before he positively asserts, "That the Greek Word so often used for Church in the New Testament *always* signifies *the People met together*, not the *Place* where they meet." I do not affirm that the Word in this Text doth *necessarily* signify the *Place* of Worship; but I believe this Writer will find it no easy matter to prove that it *cannot* have that Sense; and one disputable Text is sufficient at least to weaken his general Assertion. But after all, what Wonder is it, if the Word be not used in that Sense before there were any stated Places for the Publick Assemblies of Christians? It is very certain that after Places were set apart for that Purpose, the Christian Writers made
no

no Scruple of calling them by that Name* : And they had the same Right to use the Word in that Sense, as they had to call the Place where the *Jews* assembled, a *Synagogue*, which Word literally signifies a *Congregation*.

REASON I.

“ We Dissent from the Church of *England*, because we do not look upon it to be so pure a Church as some others are.”

He hath not been pleased to tell us what, and where those *other Churches* are ; but we suppose he means his own Congregation for one ; and in order to prove this, he allows the Definition of a Church which is in the XIXth Article of the Church of *England*, and then endeavours to shew that the National Church of *England* doth not answer the Description given in that Article, and therefore is not so pure a Church as some others, to which he thinks that Description is more applicable : That is, in Order to prove the Church of *England* not to be *so pure a Church as some others are*, he undertakes to shew, *that it is not a Church at all*. But this certainly is a very odd Method of Reasoning : For the regular way of supporting his Proposition would have been, to have produced his other Churches, and formed a Comparison between them and the Church of *England*, in order to shew their greater Degree of Purity ; And even then, it would have been incumbent upon him to prove this a sufficient Reason for Dissenting : However, he has thought proper to take another Method ; And as this is his Argument, we will now see how he maintains it.

“ The visible Church, *says he*, p. 5. is a Congregation of faithful Men, met together to worship God, in which the pure Word of God is preach’d,

* Thus *Chrysostom*, Hom. 43, in *Act. Apost.* speaking of *Paul's* Preaching in an Upper Chamber, says expressly, ἔτι οὐκ ἦν ἡ ἐκκλησία, *for as yet there was not a Church*.

“ and the Sacraments be duly ministred, according
 “ to Christ’s Ordinance, in all those Things that of
 “ Necessity are requisite to the same. This, *he tells*
 “ *us*, is the XIXth Article of the Church of *England*.”

Now tho’ one would not expect, that a Writer upon such a Subject should falsify even in the very first Quotation which he makes from the Writings of our Church; if the Reader turns to the Article (which he will find in most of our Common Prayer Books) he will perceive that those Words, *met together to worship God*, are wickedly put in by *this* conscientious Teacher; and if you take them out, his first Observation will fall at once.

The former Part of the XIXth Article is really this; *The visible Church of Christ is a Congregation of faithful Men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministred, according to Christ’s Ordinance, in all those Things that of Necessity are requisite to the same.*

Now he observes upon this Article, that, “ *by our own Words*, the visible Church *must be* no more “ *than can meet together to worship God in one Place;*” And yet in our Words there is not one Syllable about *meeting together to worship God in one Place*: From whence it appears, that the Reader ought not to depend upon the Veracity of this Man, since he endeavours to impose upon him in so barefaced and flagrant a manner.

He argues further to this Effect; That there cannot be such a Thing as a National Church, because the whole Nation cannot be supposed to meet together; and therefore the whole Nation cannot be a Congregation, as the Visible Church is in the Article said to be.

But he might have known that the Word *Congregation* has the same Sense in this Article, that it hath in the 55th Canon; where the Clergy are directed to move the People to join with them in Prayer to this Effect; *Ye shall pray for Christ’s Holy*
Catholick

Catholick Church; that is, the whole Congregation of Christian People dispersed throughout the World, and especially for the Churches of England, &c. You see then, the Catholick or Universal Church, that Church which is said to be the *Body of Christ*, and of which *Jesus Christ* is the Head, consists of all Christian People wheresoever dispersed throughout the World, although not a Millionth Part of them ever can be supposed to meet together: And as the Catholick Church consists of all particular Churches, united under the one only Sovereign Lord *Jesus Christ*; so the Church of *England* consists of all the particular Churches in this Kingdom, which are in Communion with her; and is, as we say, a Society, a Congregation of faithful Men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, &c. in the same Sense as the Church at large, or the Catholick Church, is a Congregation of all Christian People; altho' they never did, nor can they ever be supposed to meet in one Place. And this thing is well illustrated by the Constitution of a large City: For as all the several Companies of the City of *London* under the Lord Mayor, make but one City, so the several Parishes or Congregations in any Diocese under the Jurisdiction of a Bishop, make but one Church; and so we may speak of the Church of *Canterbury*, the Church of *Lincoln*, or the Church of *Norwich*, &c. And when we consider all these further united to each other by the Laws of the Nation, agreeing in the same Doctrine and Discipline, &c. We call them in a collective Body, the National Church. See *Stillingfleet's Unreasonableness of Separation*, Part III.

As we had an Instance of this Author's Fidelity, or rather his want of it, in reciting this Article; it cannot be expected we should believe him as to the Truth of his other Quotations; therefore I shall take no notice here, of what he reports from *Cyprian* and *Justin Martyr*; only I must assure the Reader they say no such thing; and if they did, it would make

no more for his purpose than the Text of Scripture which he produces, *1 Cor. xiv. 23. If therefore the whole Church be come together into one Place.* In Answer to this, it is sufficient to observe, that at the first planting of Christianity, when the Number of the Faithful, *i. e.* of Christians, was small, they might very easily meet together; and so when the far greater Number of the Citizens of *Corinth* were Heathens, the whole Church, all the Believers there, might, as the Apostle says, *come together into one Place*: But this Text would only prove that the Members of the Church of *Corinth* were at that time not very numerous; if this was necessarily its Meaning*.

But I will give this Writer a Text which is something to the Purpose; It is said *Acts iv. 4. That five thousand Believers were added to the Church in one Day; and we read of three thousand converted before that; Acts ii. 41.* So that the Church of *Jerusalem* consisted at that time of eight thousand Souls, besides the Apostles, and a great many more whose Conversion is not mention'd: And how can it be conceiv'd, that when the *Jews* were daily persecuting, and distressing the Christians, these eight thousand People could meet together in one Place to worship God? These are plain Texts and full to the Point, and yet the Church is all along spoken of as only one Society.

It is an Observation of Bishop *Stillingfleet's* which doth not once fail: That throughout the New Testament, where Churches are spoken of in the plural Number, they are the Churches of a Province; as the Churches of *Judea*, the Churches of *Asia*, the Churches of *Syria* and *Cilicia*, the Churches of *Galatia*, the Churches of *Macedonia*: But where all the Christians of one City are spoken of, it is still call'd the Church of that City; as the Church of *Antioch*, the Church of *Corinth*, &c.: And when the seven Churches of *Asia* are spoken of together, they are the seven Churches; but when they are spoken to singly,

* See the Postscript.

it is the Church of *Ephesus*, the Church of *Smyna*, &c. which being spoken without any Discrimination, as to the difference of these Places in greatness and Capacity, or the Number of Believers in them, doth evidently discover, that, what Number soever they were, they were all but the Church of that City *.

2. The second Observation upon the Article is, "That the Church is a Congregation of faithful Men," *i. e.* Believers in Christ; or if he likes the Word better, he may call them Saints, for that is all which is meant by the Word Saints, *1 Cor. xiv. 33.* It is not easy to fix his Meaning, when he talks of a Gospel Church consisting of *none but visible Saints*: If he means that the Purity of a Church cannot consist with the wicked Lives of some of its professed Members, I will venture to say, upon this Principle, there is not, nor ever was, nor ever will be a pure Church upon Earth; we know there was a *Judas* amongst the twelve Apostles. He adds, "The Clergy know whether they act according to their Articles in this Matter, or whether saying the Creed will not do." The Reader may judge of our Behaviour in this Particular; for the last Answer in our Catechism, will shew what we require of Persons who come to the Lord's Supper, and that is, that they *examine themselves whether they repent them truly of their former Sins, stedfastly purposing to lead a new Life, have a lively Faith in God's Mercy through Christ, with a thankful Remembrance of his Death, and be in Charity with all Men.*

Now, if a Man repents him truly of his former Sins, if he stedfastly purposes to lead a new Life, if he hath a lively Faith in Gods Mercy thro' Christ, if he hath a thankful Remembrance of his Death, and if he be in Charity with all Men; then we say he is a proper Person to be admitted to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but not otherwise. If

* Unreasonableness of Separation, Part III. §. 5.

the Writer knew the Church of *England* requir'd this of all her Communicants, then he is not to be excused for insinuating that we only requir'd the repeating the Creed. The Creed is only a short Collection of the chief Articles of the Christian Faith, and by solemnly repeating that, we make a solemn Profession of our Faith; but the Clergy never laid any Stress upon the meer repeating of that Form of Words; and as to the scandalous Story he tells at the End of this Observation, I will venture to say (if it was told him, which I much question) there was no Truth in it. If by *having so much Money*, he means *receiving* so much, and would thereby insinuate that we bribe the Poor, or (as he calls it, *p. 17.*) *hire* them to come to the Lord's Supper; I must acquaint the Reader, that the Collections which are made at our Sacraments, I believe, are always dispos'd of to the working Poor; and, to my own Knowledge, in many of the Parishes in *Ipswich*, where this Writer lives, (and I believe in all) the Dissenters themselves have a Part of them: So that they are distributed with an impartial Hand, among our industrious and necessitous Brethren; and receiving the Sacrament doth, of itself, by no Means entitle any Person to a Reward from us: The Insinuation therefore, that we bribe or hire our poor Communicants is false. If by *having*, he means giving so much Money, (as I should rather think he doth, for he is speaking of the Qualifications which we require of our Communicants) it is so far from being insisted upon as necessary for every one to give, that several of our Communicants receive of the Charity themselves, and never give any thing; every Person gives or not, just as he pleases; and at the very Time of the Collection, Part of the Exhortation is in the Apostle's Words, *2 Cor. ix. 7. Let every Man do according as he is disposed in his Heart, not grudgingly, or of Necessity; for God loveth a cheerful Giver.*

His third Observation is, that, according to the Article, the Pure Word of God is to be preach'd ; " Not an Oration of the excellent Constitution of " their Church, or of Passive Obedience, or an Ex-
 " clamation against Schism, or a Discourse of Mo-
 " rality, or only exclaiming against such Vices as the
 " very Light of Nature condemns." And does the Article affirm, or imply all this ? No such thing ; it is all his own, and arises from that Dexterity in perverting Words, of which he is so great a Master. If you will believe him, the Article affirms, that what is to be preach'd must be the Pure Word of God ; that is, (if there be any Sense in what follows) in a Pure Church they must preach nothing else but the Pure Word of God only, meaning thereby the Doctrines peculiar to the Christian Religion. But if you will take the Words of the Article itself, it only says, *the Pure Word of God must be preach'd* in the Congregation : And so it may, and yet Discourses of Morality, &c. may be frequently introduced. Did not our Lord preach the Pure Word of God on the Mount ? And yet that Discourse contains the finest Lecture of Morality the World ever heard ! Did not the Apostles Write the Pure Word of God in their Epistles ? And yet they frequently intermix not only Precepts of Morality, but other things also relating to the Disputes at that time subsisting in the Church. Part, therefore, of this Accusation we very willingly confess : The Clergy do indeed preach sound Morality ; they enforce it by all the persuasive Arguments, which can be brought from the Word of God, or from the Light of Reason ; and in this they only follow the Command and Example of our blessed Saviour and his Apostles. And if there are Men, who, tho' they call themselves Christians, yet are guilty of those Vices which the very Light of Nature condemns ; surely it can be no Sin to exhort and admonish a Christian Audience against them : If there are Men who daily endeavour, by all infamous Arts, to ali-
 enate

enate the Affections of the People from the establish'd Church ; and if it is permitted them to revile her, and calumniate the Clergy, with all the Freedom imaginable, (as this Writer cannot but by Experience know it is) surely then it can be no Sin in the Clergy, if they should *sometimes, occasionally*, be suffer'd to say something in Defence of that Church, of which they are the lawfully commissioned Priests : And whilst this Man, and some of his Brethren, are decoying our Members, and perswading them that Schism is no Sin, or that their Followers are not guilty of it ; Are the Clergy to be blamed, if they prove the contrary ? It was unfair to mention the Doctrine of Passive Obedience, since he might know that if it is at all, it is not now, in the odious Sense of those Words, generally maintain'd.

And tho' this Author insinuates in the next Paragraph, " That the Clergy do not preach *Jesus Christ*, " and the Doctrines of Faith and Repentance, Rege- " neration, Sanctification, and the necessity of God's " Grace in order to all these, &c. and that the Dis- " senters do ;" I beg you would consider that you have only *his* Word for it ; and if you will take mine (who am more capable of knowing that Fact, than he who seldom hears any one preach but himself, and never hears the Clergy ; if, I say, you will take my Word) I can assure you we preach all those Doctrines, and all others, agreeably to the Thirty-nine Articles : This any Man may know by Experience, for he has it in his Power to convince himself : And if he likes not that Method, I appeal to the Sermons in general which are published by the Divines of the Church of *England*.

4. The fourth Observation is, that " the Sacraments " must be duly administred according to Christ's " Ordinance," and

5. That " in administring the Ordinances of " Christ, there must be no unnecessary Things im- " posed on Men. These (he says) are the several
" Parts

“ Parts of that XIXth Article of the Church of *Eng^d* land, and we heartily agree to every one of them.”

He is to speak of these two last afterward; and therefore I should have said nothing of them here, if I was not obliged to take notice, in regard to Truth, that the Article doth not give the least Ground for the last Observation, as the Reader will soon perceive by turning to it.

The Article saith only, *That the Sacraments be duly administred according to Christ's Ordinance, in all those Things that of Necessity are requisite to the same, or are necessarily required.*

Now instead of saying with the Article; that there must be every Thing which is necessary to the Sacraments, he gives the Sense as if it had said, *there must be nothing but what is necessary*; which you perceive are evidently two very different Things.

This is another Instance of his endeavouring to impose upon his Readers; and if he is a Scholar, as he pretends to be, he could not do these Things out of Ignorance, they must be done by Design. At length then we have done with this Article; but I must insist upon it, that in the future Editions of his Book, when he calls it an Article of our Church, he should give it, not as he hath corrupted it, and perverted its Meaning; but as it stands in the Place from whence he either took it, or else ought to have taken it.

He here takes Occasion to abuse the Clergy very heartily, for two very great Faults (if they were true) Ignorance and Idleness; and to support the Charge, he brings an angry Passage from Bishop *Burnet*; but tho' this may seem a good Authority as coming from a Bishop of our Church, yet the Reader is desir'd to Consider.

First, The Bishop doth not say he ordain'd or preferr'd any of these insufficient and ignorant Men, but that *they came to be ordain'd, and came for Institution*: And this only shews, that sometimes ignorant and

wicked Men will have the Impudence to think themselves qualified, and endeavour to thrust themselves into the Ministry, tho' they are the unfittest Men in the World for it.

Secondly, If it be suppos'd (as it ought not) that the Bishop did ordain them, he must have been so wicked a Man, upon that Supposition, that his Testimony, by his own Confession, should not be believ'd.

Thirdly, If he did not ordain them, it is much for the Credit of our Church, that our Bishops take such Care to reject insufficient Men : And I must appeal to our Dissenting Brethren who are upon the Independent Scheme, whether there is such Care taken among them ? I must say, any of those impudent Young Men, whom the Bishop speaks of, (how ignorant soever they might be) might have applied Texts of Scripture as properly as this Writer does, even in a Book where he charges the Clergy with Ignorance : And as it appears from the Bishop's Account they did not want Assurance, I appeal to all Men, whether, if they could have found a Number of People weak enough to have chosen them, they might not have made a considerable Figure in the Independent, Congregational Way ? Neither must the Writer or his Admirers be angry with me for saying this, since I intend to shew, before I have done with him, that this very Reasoner is as ignorant as those young Men can be fairly supposed to have been.

Fourthly, The Reader is desired to observe, that the Bishop's chief Design in this Passage seems to be to lash the Two Universities for neglecting to read the Scriptures ; and as his Lordship was a *Scotchman* by Birth, and was educated in *Scotland*, he might not be so well acquainted with the Discipline at *Cambridge* or *Oxford* ; or in his old Age (at Seventy) might have forgotten it : For every one who knows any thing of them, knows that the Scholars are strictly obliged to be present at the reading four Chapters every Day ; and I can say of my own Knowledge, that

that Lectures in the New Testament are constantly read in several Colleges, and a strict Charge is given by the Tutors, to be constant in reading the Holy Scriptures in private.

And I must add, that the Scholars in our Universities have so many ways of being acquainted with the Scriptures (even supposing them negligent in private) that it must be very grossly their own Faults if they are ignorant in any such Degree as the Bishop pretends. For, not to mention the publick Sermons in the University Churches, the Practical Parts of the Christian Religion are frequently explained by Sermons, in all; and by Catechetical Lectures instituted for that purpose, in many of their private Colleges; And the Foundations of the Christian Religion, and the principal Doctrines of it, are discussed and solidly established, in the Disputations in the publick Schools, and private Chapels; so that it can hardly be imagined by those who know our Universities, that they should be liable to so unrighteous a Censure, as has been passed upon them upon this Account. And as to what our Author has added to Dr. Burnet's Passage, the worthy Tutors in our Universities may bear it with the more Patience, since they meet with as good usage from him, as the Nobility and Gentry of this Kingdom in general; of whom, in his courtly Stile, he has the Impudence to say, that they are led by the Nose, by such ignorant Wretches as the *good* Bishop describes.

Fifthly, That tho' this Writer doth it for him, yet, the Bishop could not intend what he said as a Reflection on the Clergy in general, since in the very Book of the Pastoral Care, (p. 192. 3d Edit.) he praises the *English* Clergy for preaching, in these Words; *But without flattering the present Age, or any Persons now alive, too much, it must be confessed, that it, [preaching] is brought to a much greater Perfection than it was ever before at among us; it is certainly*

brought nearer the Pattern St. Chrysoftome has set, or perhaps carried beyond it.

Lastly, Tho' Dr. Burnet conformed to our Church, and had a Bishoprick, and from thence it may be supposed that he speaks with Candor, when he reflects upon the Clergy directly or indirectly; yet he hath himself confessed, that he is a prejudiced Person. *I find, says he, that the long Experience I have had of the Baseness, the Malice, and the Falshood of Mankind, has inclined me to think generally the worst both of Men, and of Parties: And indeed the Peevishness, the Ill-nature, and the Ambition of many Clergymen has sharpened my Spirits perhaps too much against them: So I warn my Reader to take all that I say on these Heads, with some Grains of Allowance* *.

Now let the Writer make the most of what he says in his Preface to the Pastoral Care, he must himself be allowed to be the best Expounder of his own Meaning; and the Preface to the History of his own Times, contains as it were the last Words of Bishop Burnet †.

R E A S O N II.

“ We Dissent—Because we cannot take the Common Prayer Book for our Rule of Worship.”

“ 1. Because it orders the Reading much of the Apocrypha, &c.”

If this be allowed to have any weight, as I think it ought not, yet it must be confess'd to be but a trifling Reason. For,

First, Tho' it sets forth, that much of the Apocrypha is ordered to be read, yet out of fourteen Apocryphal Books, no more than seven are appointed to be read, and not the whole of them; of those which are read, *Ecclesiasticus* is by much the most considerable; and whoever reads that Book carefully,

* Preface to the History of his own Times.

† See *Vener's* Introduction to his new Exposition on the Common Prayer.

must allow it to be a very excellent one, altho' not of divine Authority.

Secondly, I desire you to observe that none of these Books are appointed to be read upon the Lord's Day; so that the Writer might attend our Office then without receiving any Offence from the reading of Apocryphal Books, and consequently need not forsake our Communion upon that account.

Thirdly, That it was usual in the Primitive Church to read some Scriptures not Canonical; Particularly, *Hermas's* Pastor, and *Clement's* Epistle to the *Corinthians* *.

Fourthly, What the Church of *England* saith of these Books in her sixth Article should be considered, viz. That we read them for Example of Life, and Instruction of Manners, but do not apply them to establish any Doctrine. So that tho' they be not of divine Authority they may be read for this Purpose, as well as Sermons, or any human Compositions †.

The second Objection is,

" 2. Because it appoints all Persons religiously to observe above one hundred and fifty Days in the Year as Holy Time, besides all Sabbath Days.

When he says above one hundred and fifty Days are appointed to be observed, besides Sabbath Days, I am much mistaken if he doth not say what is not strictly true || : To make the Number arise to that, he must count some twice over, and that Practice would not be thought fair in Trade, whatever he may think of it in Religion. But I lay no great Stress upon this, neither should I have mentioned it, only to shew how apt he is to sin against Truth, when he thereby thinks to strengthen his Objections against the Church of *England*. I will allow they amount to near that Number when reckoned fairly, and I will not dispute with him about twenty or thirty Days with

* See *Eusebius's* History, *Camb.* Edit. p. 90, and 108.

† *London Cases*, Vol. II. p. 249. Third Edition.

|| See the Postscript.

with which he overcharges us *, but suppose the Objection strictly true, which it is not : Yet I say, the religious Observance of many Days in the Week, besides the Lord's Day, was in Practice in the primitive Times, and the purest Ages of Christianity : The fifty Days between *Easter* and *Whitsontide* were observed in *Tertullian's* Time, who lived in the second Century ; so were the Festivals of their Martyrs : *Wednesdays* as well as *Fridays* (the Fasts of the fourth and sixth Day) were observed very early, as Mr. *Bingham* has shewn, and the forty Days of *Lent*, to be sure, in *St. Chrysostom's* Time ; of all which the *English* Reader may be satisfied, by reading the 13th Book of Mr. *Bingham's* Antiquities. The Observance then of many Religious Days besides the Lord's Day, must not be charged upon us as a Remnant of Popery, because it was practised in the purest Times ; and tho' these were multiplied extravagantly afterwards, yet that ought not to make us lay them wholly aside. It is sufficient if the Number of them be properly reduced, and this we say is done ; we retain none but those for which there is the greatest Reason, such are those in which we commemorate the Nativity, Crucifixion, Ascension, &c. of

* Feast Days, 29 ; Vigils, 16 ; Lent Fast, 40 ; Ember Days, 12 ; Rogation Days, 3 ; Fridays 52 ; State Days 4. } 156

But we must always make these *certain* Deductions, or else we must tell the same Days twice over.

Deduct from Lent ; Fridays 7, Ember Days 3, St Matthias, or the Annunciation, and its Vigil 2, Easter-Eve 1. } 13

Deduct from the Ember Days ; Fridays, 4 ; from the Rogation Days, one Vigil before Ascension Day, one State Day, the same with St. Barnabas. ——— } 6

Uncertain Deductions in the Year 1740.

Feast-Days on the Lord's Day, 8 ; Feast-Days on Fridays, 4 ; Feast Day in Lent, and its Vigil, not reckoned before, 2 ; Vigil before St. Matthew falls on an Ember Day, and the Vigil before St. Thomas, 2 ; Vigil before the Purification, and All Saints Days falls on a Friday. ——— } 18

In all 37

So the Feasts and Fasts in 1740, are 119.

Quæ

our Lord, the Festivals of the Twelve Apostles, and such other Days as were thought by our Reformers to tend most unto Godliness: A particular Defence of all these would too much swell this little Piece, and therefore I refer the Reader for further Satisfaction to the Books under-mentioned*.

And it is to be observed, that the Church hath left every one to his Liberty, as to the Degree of Strictness, and the particular manner of observing these Days; excepting only, that she seems to expect that all who can spare Time from their necessary Business should attend the publick Service.

I wish this Writer would have given me some Reason to think him as able an Expounder of Scripture as he pretends to be; but really I shall be tired with observing, that his Quotations from thence are not to his Purpose. That which he here uses can deceive none but those who are most liable to it, the most ignorant; For it must be evident to every considerate Reader, who examines the Text as it stands in the Epistle to the *Galatians*, chap. iv. ver. 9, 10, 11, that the Apostle is there speaking against the *Jewish* Observances, as he doth all along in that Epistle; and the Reasoner might as well argue from this Text, against the Observance of the Sabbath itself, as against *any* Distinction of Religious Days.

It is surprizing to see how inadvertently he confesses, that his chief Quarrel with our Holy Days is that they are appointed by Authority; for says he, *we also religiously observe occasional Days of Prayer and Thanksgiving*. And it is well known, that he himself, and the People of his Meeting, nay and the Dissenters of the *Presbyterian* Perswasion in the Town where he liveth, do constantly observe the *Thursday* in every Week, on which Day they attend their publick Worship; and yet he will not allow us to observe the *Friday*, and some other occasional Days, altho' it

* Mr. Nelson's Feasts and Fasts of the Church of England.
Binglam's Antiquities, Book XX, XXI.

never was pretended that we did this by divine Appointment.

I will say no more than this: If the Author will shew why he and his Congregation observe the *Thursday*, and the other occasional Days which he confesses to observe, I will undertake to prove we have far greater Reason to observe those Days which are appointed in our Liturgy: And before he does that, I hope he will not venture to urge this Pretence for Dissenting from us.

It is very vexatious to pursue this unaccountable Reasoner, and I have now some Relief from a late Writer of our Church, a worthy Clergyman of *Chichester*, who in his Introduction to his new Exposition of the Book of Common Prayer, &c. hath undertaken to answer this Writer, so far as relates to Forms of Prayer. His Answer is too long by far for me to transcribe the whole of it; and it is a better than I can pretend to give; and therefore I will refer the Reader to that for further Satisfaction; only, for the sake of those who may not meet with that Book, or cannot or will not purchase it, I hope Mr. *Venceer* will pardon me, if I give a short Sketch of what he there says, which should not have been so imperfect, was I not oblig'd, for the Reasons I before mention'd, p. 6. to study Brevity as much as may be.

3. The Author's Third Objection to the Common Prayer Book, is, "that thereby are impos'd on all Ministers Forms of Prayer." In Answer to this, and what the Author afterwards says, Mr. *Venceer* observes, that the First Piece of solemn Worship recorded in Scripture is a Form of Praise, Sung in Parts by Men and Women, *Exod. xv. 1. Then sang Moses and the Children of Israel this Song, &c.* That soon after God prescribed a Form of Words by which the Priests should bless the People, *Num. vi. 22.—27.* He likewise prescribes a Form of Prayer for those who should offer up their First Fruits and Tythes, *Deut. xxvi. 4.—12. and v. 13.—16.*

God Almighty prescribed a Form for the penitent Jews, *Hosea*, xiv. 1, 2, 3.

The Psalms of *David* were many of them Forms of Prayer and Praise indited by the Spirit of God, and were accordingly directed to the chief Musician, to be set to Musick for the use of the People.

[I add, that learned Men have shewn that the stated Service of the Jews at the Time of our Saviour consisted of Forms of Prayer, and that our Saviour himself used to join with them.]

Mr. *Veneer* says, Our Lord taught his Disciples a Form of Prayer, *Luke* xi. 2. *When you pray, say Our Father, &c.*

And it is observed by learned Men, that our Lord took every Sentence of the Lord's Prayer out of the Jewish Prayers then in use.

He used a Form in the Garden, *Matt.* xxvi. 44. for he prayed a third Time, saying the same Words; and his Prayer on the Cross is Part of *Psalms* xxii. 1.

From all which it appears, that to pray by a Form is not only lawfull, but that Practice is authorized by the Example of *Moses*, of *David*, of *Hosea*, and, lastly, of our Lord Himself.

Mr. *Veneer* observes, that if it be pretended the Lord's Prayer was intended as a Directory and not a Form, that is not true; and if it was, it doth not affect the Liturgy of our Church, for our Prayers are compos'd with a View to that Pattern.

That the Author speaks of *Origen* and *Justin* without referring to particular Passages, and therefore 'tis difficult to examine him concerning them; but *Tertullian* in the second Century has written a Treatise upon the Lord's Prayer, and saith that *Christ hath fixed a new Form of Prayer*; and that there is clear Proof from his Writings, that the Christians in his Time daily repeated that very Form.

That *Cyprian*, *St. Cyril of Jerusalem*, and *St. Austin* speak much to the same purpose.

He observes, that Our Reformers had surely as
D good

good a Right to make Prayers for the Use of our Congregations, as the Pastor of a private Congregation has to make Prayers for the Use of his ;

And that, in the Church of *England*, there is still Room left for extempore Prayer, if it be thought proper, *viz.* before Sermon and after it.

Mr. *Veneer* shews, that the Text, *Zeck. xii. 10.* is as impertinently applied, as *David's* Words to *Ar- aunah* are in the following Paragraph.

That the Author insinuates that he can make better Prayers than our Reformers have ; and if he will print his Prayers we shall be very ready to compare them.

That the Text, *Rom. viii. 26.* is horridly abused by him, also the 2 *Tim. i. 6.*

That his Impious Pretence to Inspiration, in his Praying and Preaching, is shocking and profane.

That a Form of Prayer is mention'd by several Writers in the most early Ages, notwithstanding our Author's Assertion to the contrary.

And that the Reason why the Clergy do not pray without a Form, is not because they are not able to pray so well as the Dissenters, but because, for wise and good Reasons, they will not.

He follows this Author thro' all his Objections, and gives Answers to them Paragraph by Paragraph ; and I intreat the Reader who desires further Information in this Particular, to consult the Book itself.

But I must observe that the *Reasoner*, in his Answer to Objection I. *p. 12.* takes the same Liberty in quoting Scripture, that he has elsewhere done with regard to the Articles and Liturgy of the Church : For the Apostle, *Rom. viii. 26.* doth not say, we know not *what* to pray for, but, we know not what to pray for *as we ought*. The *Greek* is, what to pray for as we ought, we know not.

The Author of the *Reasons* allows, that Dissenters in their Extempore Prayers, are liable to vent false Doctrines ; — that Dissenters Prayers are often incoherent ;

herent ; — that, for want of a Form, they are sometimes unintelligible, the People know not what they mean by them ; — and that, for want of a Form, Dissenters are often guilty of Tautology, or Repetition of the same thing. I say, these four things he confesses, for all he endeavours to do in Opposition to them, is to shew that our Prayers are liable to the same Objections ; and I only desire the Reader to observe how he doth this.

He says we vent false Doctrine as well as they, in these Words, *Remember not Lord the Offences of our Forefathers* ; and yet he says, “ He does not “ dispute what is truly intended by them.” Now, what is the Use of Words but to convey the meaning which the speaker intends ? And if he can find no Fault with our Meaning, with what Face can he say it looks like false Doctrine ? And if the Reader compares this Petition with, *Exod. xx. 5. I am a jealous God, visiting the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children unto the third and fourth Generation* ; I imagine he will not be so perverse as this Writer is, when he says it *looks like* praying for the Dead, tho’ he owns at the same time it is not praying for them.

He says our Prayers are *incoherent* as well as theirs, and instances in that for the Clergy and People ; which he did not understand, tho’ the Sense is very plain, as this small addition to it may inform him.

Almighty and Everlasting God, who alone workest great Marvels, (who at first didst, in a most marvellous Manner, send down thy Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and first Christians ; and dost still continue to thy Church the ordinary Influence of the Holy Spirit, but in a Way to us inconceivable ;) send down (we beseech thee) upon our Bishops and Curates, and all Congregations committed to their Charge, the healthful Spirit of thy Grace, &c.

To shew our Prayers are *unintelligible*, he produces one which is as easily understood, as any one in the whole Prayer-Book : It is one which I have always

admired myself; and which I have often, with Pleasure, heard commended, and admired by others, and better Judges. For the understanding it, only these two plain things are to be remembred, which no thinking Christian will dispute.

1. That we are unworthy of ourselves to ask any Favour of God, except thro' the Merits and Mediation of *Jesus Christ*; And

2. That as we know not what the Consequences of Things will be, so, as to temporal Blessings, we know not what will in the End be good for the Sons of Men, or otherwise; upon these two Considerations we pray thus:

Almighty God, the Fountain of all Wisdom, who knowest our Necessities before we ask, and our Ignorance in asking; we beseech thee to have Compassion upon our Infirmities; and those things which for our Unworthiness we dare not, and for our Blindness we cannot ask, vouchsafe to give us for the Worthiness of thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lastly, He says, "The Dissenters in their Prayers, are not guilty of repeating the same thing so much as we."

But here it should be consider'd, that it is not every Repetition which is improper; for our Lord himself prayed three times in the same Words, and the 136 *Psalms* hath *his Mercy endureth for ever* Twenty-seven times.

If, therefore, the Matter of a Petition be weighty, and apt to move those pious Affections which God is most pleased with in our Prayers, and if it be framed with Judgment, and comes in fitly and in due place, and not too often, (all which Rules are observed in our Prayer-Book;) then, to repeat it, is proper and fit, and all is right, as appears from the Example of our Lord, and from the *Psalms* abovemention'd*.

But what we object to the extempore Prayers of Dissenters, is the often repeating the same Words,

* See London Cases, Vol. II. p. 230. 3d Edit.

of little or no Consequence; when they tediously drawl out the same dull Sentence, I know not how often, whilst they are studying for another to follow it.

And if the Writer has the Confidence to say this Charge is false, I only desire one of his Congregation will write down any of his extempore Prayers, just as he speaks it; and I will warrant him he will find frequent Instances of what I am saying. Neither do I mean by *this* to reflect upon the Abilities of this Man: if he was as able as most Men are, this Inconvenience would follow from the Nature of Man; and cannot be avoided but by praying by a Form.

R E A S O N III.

“ We cannot join with the Church of *England* in their Order for Baptism.

“ I. We except against that human Ordinance, signing with the Cross, as a Popish Invention.”

That it is not a Popish Invention, is evident, because there is no doubt but that it was used in the Christian Church long before any of those Corruptions were known, which we justly blame the Church of *Rome* for maintaining; I mean, it was used in the purest Ages, so long ago as *Tertullian's* Time, in the second Century, and is all along mentioned with Reverence by the best Writers, from that Time, to the Time of *St. Austin*; and as it is generally agreed, that then there were no Corruptions in the Church which would warrant any Man to separate himself from her Communion, the Sign of the Cross should not ignorantly be branded with so odious a Name, as that of being a Popish Invention; and as it hath no Relation to Popery, the Author may cease to wonder why it is not laid aside.

He says further, “ We make it a Sacrament, for it is ordered to be done, in token that hereafter they shall not be ashamed to confess [the Faith of] Christ crucified; and so by their own Definition of
“ a Sa-

“ a Sacrament, it is made an outward and visible
 “ Sign of an inward and spiritual Grace :” But here,
 with his usual Honesty, he giveth but Part of a Sen-
 tence for the whole of it : Our Definition of a Sacra-
 ment, which all *Protestants*, nay and *Papists* too, agree
 in, is this ; A Sacrament is an outward and visible Sign
 of an inward and spiritual Grace, given unto us, and
 ordained by Christ himself, as a Means whereby we re-
 ceive the same, and a Pledge to assure us thereof : Now,
 it was never asserted that the Sign of the Cross is a
 Means whereby we receive Grace ; nor that it is a
 Pledge to assure us of it ; nor that our Saviour
 Christ instituted it ; but we have always insisted on
 the contrary : so that we cannot be charged with
 making it a Sacrament, as is further declared in the
 30th Canon.

It might with the same Reason be pretended, that
 Kneeling at Prayer is a Sacrament ; for that is a Sign
 of Humility in Devotion ; and Humility is certainly
 an inward and spiritual Grace given unto us.

But we acknowledge the Sign of the Cross to be
 an indifferent Ceremony ; the Use of which is indeed
 warranted by the Practice of the Church in the most
 incorrupt Ages ; but the Sacrament of Baptism is
 compleat and perfect without that ; and it is no
 otherwise held necessary, than as it is appointed by
 our Superiors *.

The next Objection to the Office of Baptism is :

“ 2. That Parents are not suffered to covenant
 “ with God for their own Children ; but others
 “ [namely, Godfathers and Godmothers] must do it,
 “ tho’ they be strangers, or wicked, and the Parents
 “ gracious.”

And here, if any Man takes his Notion of our
 Practice from what this Writer saith, he might ima-
 gine this to be a very cruel and wicked thing : But it
 is easy to observe.

* See London Cases, Vol. III. p. 1, &c.

That it is a very wise and prudent Regulation in our Church. For,

First, It would have served no good Purpose to have made the Parents covenant for the Christian Education of their own Children ; because, if they are good People, they are already under the most prevailing Obligations to take care of that, from their natural Affection, from Reason, and from Religion : And if they are so wicked, that none of those Considerations will move them to it, it is in vain to suppose that their Promise to the Church should. But,

Secondly, If the Parents happen to die ; if they are unable to instruct their Children themselves, or to get them instructed by others ; If they are so careless as to neglect it, or so wicked as purposely to omit it : In any of these Cases, the Church hath a Security from three Persons, who are to undertake for every Child admitted to the Privileges of the Christian Covenant in the Church of *England*, that *it shall be taught all things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his Soul's Health ; and that the Child shall be virtuously brought up, to lead a Godly and a Christian Life.*

And if it be a wise and good Regulation, to have three such Persons to answer in the Name of the Child, and to instruct him afterwards, it is not at all to the purpose to enquire, from whence the Custom arose ; let it come from the *Jews* or from the *Gentiles*, if it is right and fit, it ought to be retained : And therefore the Objection which the Writer brings, *viz.* “ That Godfathers and Godmothers were in “ Use under the Law ” is altogether impertinent ; and as the Objection is impertinent, so the Answer to it is silly.

He very sagely remarks to this effect : That a new-born Infant cannot go alone, and therefore must be carried ; and that as the Circumciser could not well perform his Office, and hold the Child, he had somebody to hold it for him. I confess this Account

count of Circumcision is wonderfully instructive ; and if he preaches thus, no doubt his Audience must be greatly edified : But yet it is not quite so clear as it might have been ; for it doth not appear, but that it is possible the Woman that carried the Child, might also hold it in her Lap, and then carry it away afterwards ; so that, possibly, there might be no more than two Persons present in all. However, the Author seems to be positive in this, that “ neither of the Persons present, promised any thing “ for the Child.”

And yet, as positive as this Man is, a Person of less skill might suspect, from the Nature of the Thing, that there should be some such Office, when an Infant was to enter into Covenant with God ; and, if he will not be offended at it, I will take the Liberty to inform him of these three Things.

1. When a Heathen was admitted into the *Jewish* Covenant, it was done by Circumcision, Baptism and Sacrifice ; and three Persons did always assist at their Solemnities, *as Witnesses of the Covenant.*

2. These Persons examined the Profelyte very strictly, as to the Motives of his turning *Jew* ; they likewise instructed him in the Law of *Moses* ; and moreover, the Profelyte promised in their Presence to keep the Law.

3. When the Person, so made a Profelyte, was an Infant, then these three Persons promised in his Name.

These Things are shewn by no less a Man than Mr. *Selden*. *Vid. de Synedriis*, l. 1. c. 3. and *de Jure Nat. and Gent. &c.* l. 2. c. 2.

And now let any Man judge, whether there is not some Resemblance between the Office of these three Persons, and the Office of our Godfathers and Godmothers.

3. The Third Objection to the Office for Baptism is,
 “ That the Godfathers and Godmothers are forced
 “ to promise what is in the Power of no Creature
 “ on

“ on Earth or in Heaven to perform, *that the Child*
 “ *shall renounce the Devil and all his Works, and con-*
 “ *stantly believe God’s Holy Word, and obediently keep all*
 “ *his Commandments, and walk in the same all the Days*
 “ *of his Life.”*

It is difficult to prevail on one’s self to give serious Answers to such odd and unaccountable Cavils ; but as I determined with myself not to be provoked to do otherwise, the Writer may take this Answer.

First, That Repentance and Faith are required by God’s Word of Persons who are to be baptized.

Secondly, That the Godfathers and Godmothers are not supposed to make those Answers otherwise than in the Child’s Name, *i. e.* as Proxies deputed by his Parents in his stead. This he might have learned, if he had pleased, from the third Question put to them, which is, *Wilt thou be baptized in this Faith ? A. That is my Desire **. You see they speak in the Person of the Child, and cannot be supposed to do otherwise, because they have themselves been long since baptized. They do not then promise that the Child *shall* renounce the Devil, &c. but they act in his Name, and speak for him, that he *will* renounce him, &c.

Thirdly, That they promise nothing more than what is contained in these two Words, Repentance and Faith, which are necessarily required of all Persons to be baptized ; and the Infant Child, by Reason of its tender Age, cannot promise in his own Person.

Fourthly, That in Civil Affairs, where it is necessary for Infants to do any Act, they do it, not in their own Person (that is impossible) but by their Proxies or Guardians..

And there is a Case which is very applicable to this Cavil, and which this Writer might have considered ; for it is mentioned upon this very Occasion by Mr. *Wheatley* ; and that is the Case of an Infant

* See *Wheatley* upon the Place.

King, at whose Coronation some one of the Nobility takes the Coronation Oath, as Proxy, in his stead; and yet, *no Creature on Earth or in Heaven can tell*, whether when he comes to Age the young King will keep it; *and it is God's Work alone to give him Grace to do it*; but nevertheless, without doubt, he is bound by that Oath, and must answer for the Breach of it, as much as if he had actually taken it in his own Person; and just so is the Infant Christian in the Case I am speaking of.

Neither would it at all be of Advantage to this Author's Cause, if what he alledges were true, that most Proxies never mind what they undertake afterwards; for the Church is not to be blamed for the Sins of some of its Members; if they neglect what they so solemnly promise, beyond dispute they are highly culpable, and they must answer for it: But tho' it were never so much neglected, it is both a wise, and a pious Regulation in our Church, which requires such a Security; and therefore he should not pretend this to be a proper Objection to the Office for Baptism.

The Fourth Objection to that Office, is this;

"We see no Reason to believe that every Child
 "baptized with Water, is also regenerated by the
 "special Grace of God, as they express in their Or-
 "der for Baptism, in these Words: *We call upon*
 "*thee for this Infant, that he coming to thy Holy Bap-*
 "*tism, may receive Remission of Sins, by Spiritual Re-*
 "*generation.*"

Now let any Man of common Sense judge, whether in these Words we express any such Thing, as to the Regeneration of the Child; we neither say he is, or that he is not regenerated; in these Words we affirm nothing about it, (tho' if we had, it would have been very defensible :) The Reader must perceive these Words are Part of a Prayer; and, whether the Child is or not, one would think the most capricious Man would allow us to pray that he may be rege-

regenerated *. Whether the Author was sensible that any Man almost must have this Answer ready for him, I will not say; but he immediately runs away to another Objection to these Words, *viz.*

“ That we pray the Child may receive Remission of his Sins by Spiritual Regeneration; whereas the Word of God tells us, Remission of Sins is only by the Blood of *Jesus Christ*, and so our Church says in her Order for the Communion;” for which Reason (as an Instance of his Civility) he charges the Compilers of our Liturgy (that venerable Body to whom the whole Reformation is so highly indebted) as being guilty of a “ gross Blunder.”

Mr. *Veneer* has fully answered this, and has reconciled those two Passages; he observes, that what our XIth Article asserts, *viz.* *That by the Merits of our Lord Jesus Christ only are we accounted righteous* (i. e. are justified or saved) is indeed strictly true; But as the Merits of Christ will not be applied to us, nor will they be effectual in saving us, except we perform the Conditions required by the Gospel-Covenant; namely, the Conditions of Faith and Repentance; we may very properly be said to be saved either by Faith, or by Works, which are the Fruits of Repentance: The Merits of Christ are the efficient Cause, and Faith and Repentance are the conditional Causes of our Salvation.

And before this Writer had charged the Compilers of our Liturgy with *blundering* for speaking thus, he should have considered, that so saith the Scripture likewise. The Apostle *Paul* saith, *Eph. ii. 8. By Grace are we saved thro' Faith*; and the Apostle *James* saith, *chap. ii. ver. 24. by Works a Man is justified*.

* The Reader is desired to take Notice, that I do not here deny but that the Church of *England* doth indeed hold, that all Infants rightly Baptized are actually regenerated; and that is defended in my Answer to the fifth Objection to the Office of Baptism: But, what I contend for now, is only, that we do not say so, in those Words which the Author of the *Reasons* produces to prove it.

So that we may speak of these conditional Causes, and yet not deny that one only grand and efficient Cause of Salvation.

The Authors of the Liturgy therefore are not guilty of blundering for this; and the Expression above objected to, is, without doubt, sufficiently justified by these two other Texts of Scripture, which I recommend to the perusal of this Writer; *1 Pet. iii. 21. The like Figure whereunto even Baptism doth now save us*; and *Tit. iii. 5. He saved us by the washing of Regeneration, i. e. Baptism.* And I must add this, that the Apostle *Peter* exhorts the *Jews*, *Acts ii. 38. to be baptized—for the Remission of Sins.* I hope therefore upon the whole, the Author will pardon us for praying that the Child may obtain Remission of his Sins by *Spiritual Regeneration.*

The Fifth Objection to the Office for Baptism, is, That we assert, “ That it is clear from the Word of God, that Children baptiz’d and dying in their Infancy, before they commit actual Sin, are undoubtedly saved.

“ It is not clear to us, nor can they shew it in all the Word of God.”

We cannot help its not being clear to him, nor are we answerable for his Carelessness in not informing himself better, or his Inability of being informed; but if he was as well acquainted with the Word of God, and if he understood it as well as he pretends to do, this Thing would be very clear to him from these Texts, *1 Cor. xii. 13. We are all baptized into one Body, i. e. the Body of Christ, and we know the Church is the Body of Christ, Eph. i. 22. Gal. iii. 27. As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.* St. Paul calls Baptism, *the washing of Regeneration, by which God saved us, Tit. iii. 5. St. Peter orders his Penitents, Acts ii. 37, 38. to be baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus, for the Remission of Sins*; And *Acts xxii. 16. Ananias bids St. Paul be baptized*

baptized and wash away his Sins. Now I will only observe these three Things to you.

1. There is no Dispute between this Author and me, concerning Infant-Baptism; so that I may say without Censure from him, that there is no doubt, but that Infants may be admitted into the Covenant of Grace, and may partake of the Benefits thereof by Baptism; because, Infants were expressly ordered by Almighty God to be admitted into Covenant with him, under the Law, at eight Days old; and also, because this hath been the constant Practice of the Church, from the very Time of the Apostles to the present.

2. There is no doubt, but that to those who rightly receive it, Baptism doth actually confer those Benefits, which the Texts now cited do declare it doth; it makes them Members of *Christ*, God saveth them by that washing of Regeneration, they have Remission of their Sins, and their Sins are washed away by it.

3. There is no doubt but that, as Infants cannot possibly miss of Salvation except it be upon account of that universal Pollution of Original Sin, so they are incapable of forfeiting those Privileges to which they are entitled by Baptism:

Therefore if they die before they commit actual Sin, it is clear by God's Word that they are undoubtedly saved.

N. B. If this Author can prove that what unscriptural Officers do in the Church, is invalid; he will effectually prove that his own Acts are so.

R E A S O N IV.

“ We cannot join with the Church of *England* in the Lord's Supper.

1. Because they order every one to kneel at their receiving it.”

His Objections to kneeling at the Lord's Supper are several; and I will give them in his own Words, though

though 'tis difficult to make Sense of them as they stand.

“ 1. Because the *Papists* do so, and their Reason is, because they believe the Bread, after Consecration, is the very Body of *Christ* :

“ 2. But, if it be not so, it looks like Idolatry to kneel before it.

“ 3. But because this was not the Custom of the Apostles (but sitting, *Matt.* xxvi. 20. 26.) And

“ 4. Because we are bid to abstain from all Appearance of Evil ; therefore we reject it.”

That he is sure of, let the Reason be what it will : And I will venture to say any other Reason would have done as well as these, but as I promis'd to be serious, I beg the Reader would consider ; as to the

First, That it is uncertain what his Meaning is ; for he hath express'd himself ambiguously, and the Words *their Reason* may relate either to the *Papists* or to Us : If he means it is *our Reason* for kneeling, (as indeed the Words which follow, *but if it be not so*, give some Reason to suspect) and if he would thereby insinuate that we hold that monstrous Doctrine of Transubstantiation, all the World knows how false the Charge is : And this would be so gross a Calumny, that I can scarce believe any Man, no not *this Writer*, would advance it ; I will not, therefore, suppose this to be his Meaning. If then he means no more than that it is the *Papists* Reason for doing it, what is that to us ? We are not concern'd to defend the *Papists* Reason (if it be theirs ;) and if he means that kneeling at the Lord's Supper is a *Papist* Custom, *i. e.* a Custom which crept into that Church in the corrupt Ages, amongst the other superstitious and unwarrantable Practices, which we and all Protestants condemn ; then the Reader may consider,

First, That in the earliest and purest Ages, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was always receiv'd in a praying Posture.

Secondly, It was receiv'd in some Places every Day,
and

and generally three or four times in a Week ; especially on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*.

Thirdly, That throughout the Year the First Christians always prayed kneeling, except on the Lord's-Day, and on the Days from *Easter* to *Whitsontide* ; and then they prayed standing.

Therefore, when they receiv'd the Sacrament on the Lord's-Day, or on any of those Fifty Days, then it is probable they receiv'd it standing ; but when they receiv'd it on the ordinary Week Days, and especially on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*, which were stated Fasts, they receiv'd it kneeling ; but, by the way, never sitting. The Custom then of kneeling at the time of the Sacrament is not to be call'd a *Popish* Custom, because it was practis'd in those early and pure Times of Christianity, long before *Poperly* came in Fashion.

I cannot forbear adding, that the Posture, which our Dissenters are so fond of, may more properly be called *Popish* than that which we use, for the Pope himself receives the Sacrament *sitting*.

And I confess I am inclined to think, they insist upon that Posture, rather in Opposition to us, than for any other Reason.

In a General Synod of the *Protestant Reformed Churches* in *Poland*, it was declared, that, *Forasmuch as sitting was introduced first by the Arians, (beside the Custom used in all the Evangelical Churches throughout Europe) we reject it as peculiar to them, (that as they do irreverently treat Christ, so also his sacred Appointments) and as a Ceremony less comely, and devout, and to many very Offensive.* Synod. Petricav. Conclu. 4. An. 1578.

Now if the Church had enjoined sitting, might not this perverse Man more easily have found out an Appearance of Evil in that Posture, as *looking like* a want of due Reverence in so solemn an Act of Religion ?

Calamy in his Letter printed at the End of the 23d Edition of the *Plain Reasons*, says, *The Communicants*

nicants [among the Dissenters] are at Liberty to use their own Posture in the Time of Receiving. Therefore they may kneel if they please ; what harm then can there be in our doing that, which they allow their own Members to do ?

But perhaps the Force of the Reason lies in this, that the Church *orders* every one to kneel : I must own, if this be the Objection, he has taken a strange Method of supporting it ; for if there be any Weight in what he says, it lies against the Posture itself ; but there is no finding out this Man's Meaning in his *Reasons*, by what he produces in support of them, which is often quite foreign to the purpose. If then he meant so, I must observe, that a Thing in itself *lawful* doth not become *unlawful* by being commanded by a proper Authority ; and if we are at Liberty to use *any* Posture, the Governors of the Church are at Liberty to choose what Posture they think most proper. *See more of this afterwards.*

But, saith he, secondly, “ it looks like Idolatry to kneel before it.” But the Church of *England* hath sufficiently declared her Abhorrence of the Doctrine of the bodily Presence in the Sacraments, and that by kneeling we do not pretend to adore it, in these Words : *Yet lest the same kneeling should by any Persons, either out of Ignorance and Infirmary, or out of Malice and Obstinacy, be misconstrued or depraved ; it is here declared, that thereby no Adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread or Wine there bodily received, or unto any corporal Presence of Christ's natural Flesh and Blood. For the Sacramental Bread and Wine remain still in their very natural Substances, and therefore may not be adored, (for that were Idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful Christians) **

Now, if, notwithstanding this solemn and express Declaration of ours, he will say, tho' it is not Idolatry, yet it *looks like* Idolatry to kneel before it ; he may with as much Truth, and every whit as much

* End of the Office for the Communion.

Reason say, that it looks like Idolatry to kneel before our Prayer Books.

Thirdly, he says “ this [kneeling] was not the Custom of the Apostles, but sitting, *Matt. xxvi. 20, 26.*” Now to affirm boldly that the Apostles sat when they received it, and to refer to a Text of Scripture for a Proof of it, looks like fair dealing at first sight, and might easily deceive an unwary Reader : But I will shew, either that he is very ignorant of what he pretends most to understand, *i. e.* the Scriptures, and then he is by his own Account very unfit to teach others, (whatever airs he may give himself in exclaiming against the pretended Ignorance of the Clergy ;) or else that he endeavours to impose upon his Readers, and therefore cannot be entitled to the Character of an honest Man; and then he is disqualified for such an Office by that.

It is certain, if he understood the Meaning of the Word which is translated, *Matt. xxvi. 20. he sat down*, he must know that it signifies quite a different Posture from what we mean by sitting, and that it was translated so as a more intelligible Expression, in Allusion to the common Posture which we in this Part of the World use at our Meals : But the *Greek* Word signifies a Posture of Discumbency, or lying along *; and the Custom of the *Jews* in our Saviour’s Time, was to lye along upon Things like our Couches, upon their left Side, three or four upon a Couch; and in that Posture to eat their Meals †; and

* It is rendered in the vulgar Latin by *accumbo* & *discumbo*.

† I have sometimes thought with myself, that in the common Representations which are made of it, the Drawing our Saviour and his Apostles at the last Supper in a sitting Posture, has had no small Influence upon the Minds of the Vulgar; and has increased their Aversion to the more reverent Posture of kneeling : But I own, I was surprized to see that Mr. *Peirce* in his Vindication of the Dissenters, was not ashamed to mention this gravely, as an Argument for the Posture of sitting : *That when Churchmen portray Christ giving the Sacrament to his Disciples, they represent him not as lying, but sitting, after our Fashion : Thus* (says he) *does*

and that our Lord and his Apostles were in this very Posture at the last Supper, *Matt.* xxvi. 20. before the Institution of the Sacrament, will appear from *John* xiii. 23. where he says, that at this Supper; *there was leaning on Jesus's Bosom*; one of his Disciples, and v. 25. he then *lying on Jesus's Breast*: From whence it is plain they laid along after the usual Manner, and the Beloved Disciple *John*, was the next Man to *Jesus*, and therefore *leaned on his Bosom*, or *lay on his Breast*; so that the Apostles did not sit as he boldly affirms, but lay along; and it is an unpardonable Thing in him to take Advantage from the *English* Translation, and from thence to deceive his Reader, by urging an Authority for the Posture of sitting.

The Truth of the Matter is, that it is extremely uncertain in what Posture the Apostles first received it, because in eating the Passover the *Jews* often changed their Posture; and therefore, tho' it is said, *Matt.* xxvi. 20. they lay along in the manner before mentioned, it is not certain but that they might have changed their Posture before the Lord's Supper was instituted; and as nothing is expressly said about the Posture, at the Time of the Institution, we are left to our Liberty concerning that, and each Church is to follow that Usage which they judge to be most reverend and decent: The Church of *England* hath chosen kneeling, as agreeable to the Practice of the Church in the purest Times, and as she judges it the most becoming and suitable Posture for the Per-

Bishop Patrick in a Copper Cut prefixed to his Christian Sacrifice. If the good Bishop had engraven it with his own Hand, could more have been said? It is indeed an extraordinary thing, for that Gentleman to charge him with a Copper Cut prefixed to his Book. Since it is a known Thing, that such sort of Ornaments and Embellishments, are the usual Devices of the Printers and Publishers of a Book, in which the Author is very seldom, if ever concerned. An Intelligent Reader will easily perceive for what Purpose, and for whose Use, such artful indeed, but low and vulgar Arguments are calculated. See *Peirce's Find.* p. 491,
formance

formance of so solemn an Action; and in my own private Opinion, I heartily think she hath made a proper Choice; but if I was in another Country where the National Protestant Church had appointed another Posture, I should think it very sinful to quarrel with it, and forsake its Communion, for so trifling a Ceremony.

It appears to have been the general Opinion of *Protestants*, that the Original Posture was not certainly to be discovered; and that it was a Circumstance of no great Consequence, since we find so great a Variety in the Practice of the *Protestant Churches* abroad; for in some of them they receive it kneeling, in others standing, others sitting, and in others walking. And amongst them all, I shall only say, there is as little, if not less to be said for sitting, than for any of the other *.

Fourthly, *We are indeed bid to abstain from all Appearance of Evil*; but what Appearance of Evil there can be in kneeling at the Sacrament, when the Church hath expressly guarded against any Misconstruction of it, in her publick Declarations concerning it, I leave this Author to make out.

2. He objects to our administering the Sacrament, when there are only "two or three Persons present," but he should have added, *besides the Minister and the sick Person*. And in Answer to this I shall only observe, that this Practice, tho' not deduced from Scripture, is very ancient, as Mr. *Bingham* has proved sufficiently, (Book XV. c. 4.) to whom I refer the curious Reader; and tho' this Writer says it should be administred in the Church only, Mr. *Bingham* there brings an Authority from *Tertullian* in the second Century, (which surely I may set against this Man) that in Cases of Necessity, such as *where a Person was sick or in Prison, when a greater Number*

* See *London Cases*, Vol. III. Discourse of Kneeling at the Sacrament.

could not be had, three were enough to make a Church.
See also *Matt. xviii. 20.*

This was a Practice in the Church a vast Number of Years before private Masses were ever heard of, and has no relation at all to them.

3. He objects, “ that Persons are allowed to come
“ to that Holy Ordinance to qualify themselves for
“ Places of Trust and Profit, which, *he says*, is a
“ horrid Profanation of it.”

The Wisdom of the Legislature hath thought fit to guard our Constitution in Church and State, by not admitting any Person to Places of Trust and Profit, but such as they are assured are Friends to the Constitution; of which this hath been proved to be a proper Test *; and if any Man presumes to profane this Holy Ordinance upon that Account, doubtless, he is highly criminal, and must one Day severely answer for it; nevertheless, in Charity we should hope, that no Man is guilty of so foul a Crime; however, if any such there be, that is not a sufficient Reason for any Man to forsake our Communion, as I will shew in my Answer to his

4. Last Objection upon this Head, which is,
“ That they ordinarily admit any Person to that
“ Ordinance that desires it; nay more, for they order
“ the Minister to invite all to it, that are present,
“ at hearing the Word, &c.

I had Occasion before to justify the Church of *England* as to the Qualifications which we require of our Communicants; and as to the general Invitation here objected to, the Reader is desired to observe:

That tho’ all that come to Church *may not* be fit to go to the Table of the Lord, yet it is very fit that they *should* be so; and therefore we, as the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God, do in God’s Behalf, as his Officers, lawfully sent and commissioned for this Purpose, invite all

* See the Plea for the Sacramental Test, published in 1736, and the other Tracts published about that Time.

the Congregation to partake of that Holy Ordinance; but we do not invite them to come whether they are qualified or not, we exhort them if they are not fit, to make themselves so, and it cannot surely be said, there is any Sin in that.

And when he says a little lower, that all we ask of our Communicants is, that *they be in Charity with all Men*; I know not whether I am more astonished at the Wickedness or the Assurance of this graceless Writer. For he must know, if he hath read our Offices, that we set before our Communicants the great Danger of receiving unworthily, in these Words.

Dearly beloved in the Lord, Ye that mind to come to the Holy Communion, &c. must consider, how St. Paul exhorteth all Persons diligently to try and examine themselves before they presume to eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup. For, as the Benefit is great, if with a true penitent Heart and lively Faith we receive that Holy Sacrament, &c. So is the Danger great if we receive the same unworthily. For then we are guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ our Saviour; we eat and drink our own Damnation, not considering the Lord's Body; we kindle God's Wrath against us; we provoke him to plague us with divers Diseases and sundry kinds of Death. Judge therefore yourselves, Brethren, that ye be not judged of the Lord: Repent you truly for your Sins past; have a steadfast and lively Faith in Christ our Saviour; amend your Lives, and be in perfect Charity with all Men, so shall ye be meet Partakers of those Holy Mysteries.

What shall we say then of this Man, who after reading this can say, *all we ask of our Communicants is, that they be in Charity with all Men.* The most unlearned Reader must perceive we not only require that, but in this Exhortation, (which is always solemnly read at the Time of the Celebration of the Sacrament) we admonish them, to examine themselves, and judge themselves, to repent them truly of their Sins, to have a steadfast and lively Faith in *Christ*, and to amend their Lives: I had Occasion to take
Notice

Notice of such a Calumny before, *p.* 13, and I desire the Reader would add this to what I then said : I leave the Reader in his own Thoughts to abhor and detest this infamous Author ; for what Words are bad enough for one who can bring so barefaced and so false an Accusation against the National Church in which he lives, and in the pretended Cause of Religion ?

The Remainder of this Objection is some of the grossest and vilest Abuse that I ever read ; I have indeed unwillingly heard such Language in the Streets, but I should never have expected to have seen it in a Book, whose Author pretends the least Regard to Conscience.

Part of what he charges many of our Communicants with, if it were true, I think he could not know it : Whether they have saving Knowledge or Faith, &c. And who art thou that judgest another ? To his own Master he standeth or falleth.

But as the bad will ever mingle with the good, if we should allow, that possibly there may be some Communicants who are unworthy Receivers, it must be granted, this is an Inconvenience which cannot be avoided ; I fear it may be found amongst every Society of Christians, of what Denomination soever ; and was I disposed to make Reprisals, I could find some Saints, even in his own Congregation, so black, that I should do no Injustice to them, if I was to rank them among the greatest Sinners : But I do not mean to make *this* an Objection to him, nor to the rest of his Congregation ; I know it cannot be avoided, do what he will ; neither doth it in the least affect other Men : For tho' another Man should receive unworthily with me, that doth not make me an unworthy Receiver : Indeed to partake with other Men of their Sins, is Sin ; but to partake with a Sinner of that which is no Sin, can be none * : And therefore this is not a sufficient Plea for Separation.

And it appears that this was the Opinion of the great Apostle : The Church of *Corinth* was beyond Dispute very wicked, for there were Schisms and Contentions among them, 1 *Cor.* i. 12. Envyng, Strife, Divisions or Factions, 1 *Cor.* iii. 3. Fornication and Incest, 1 *Cor.* v. 1. they eat in the Idolatrous Temples, 1 *Cor.* viii. 10. and were Drunk even when they met together to celebrate the Lord's Supper, 1 *Cor.* xi. 21, 28. And what saith St. *Paul* to this ? Not that they should separate upon this Account, not that they should pry into their Neighbour's State, and examine whether he comes properly or not, but this, *let a Man examine himself*, and so let him eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup, 1 *Cor.* xi. 18. and every private Christian who obeys the Apostle's Command, who takes Care to examine and judge himself, and not his Neighbour, may safely receive the Holy Sacrament, and the Unworthiness of other People (if any such there are) will never be imputed to him *.

R E A S O N V.

“ We dissent from the Church of *England*, because
 “ the generality of the Priests dissent from their old
 “ Doctrines, and the chief of the Thirty-nine Ar-
 “ ticles of Religion, &c.”

But this is said without any colour of Proof, therefore I shall say nothing more to it, than that we deny it, and we appeal to the Writings of our Divines, with only these two cautions :

First, Before any Man asserts as the *Reasoner* does, he should be sure he understands the Meaning of those Articles.

Secondly, That the present Opinion of the Church of *England* is not to be taken from one or two private Writers, but from our Offices and Creeds, and the Writings of the Divines of our Church in general.

* London Cases, Vol. I. p. 230, &c.

REASON VI.

“ We except against two Things, especially in the
 “ Order for the Burial of the Dead.

“ 1. They thank God for taking them away, Bad
 “ as well as Good,” which in the Case of bad Men
 he thinks wrong. But yet it hath pleased God to
 declare, *Eze. xviii. 23, 32. That he hath no Pleasure*
in the Death of the Wicked, but rather desireth he should
turn from his Wickedness and live; and therefore we
 may fairly conclude, that when it pleases God to
 take even a wicked Man out of the World, he doth
 it in Mercy, that he may not go on to heap up
 Wrath to himself against the Day of Wrath. *Veneer.*

And certainly when a Friend or near Relation is
 delivered from the Miseries of this sinful World,
 (which generally before our Deaths are very grievous)
 it is a Benefit which a pious and serious, or only a
 good natured Man, would and ought to be thankful
 to God for, exclusive of all worldly Considerations
 whatsoever.

“ 2. Nor can we say (as they do) of every one,
 “ (even the vilest Wretches that they bury) that we
 “ have sure and certain Hope of their Resurrection
 “ to eternal Life.”

Here we have another Instance of his Honesty;
 tho’ this seems not to wound the Conscience of this
 Man, but to have been written with a grave Face,
 he knows very well we say no such Thing : Look in
 any Prayer-Book, you will see we commit his Body to
 the Ground, in sure and certain hope of *the* Resur-
 rection to eternal Life ; not of *his*, nor *her*, nor *their*
 Resurrection, but of *THE* Resurrection ; and agree-
 ably to this, when we bury the Dead at Sea, we com-
 mit the Body to the Deep, looking for *the* Resurrec-
 tion of the Body (when the Sea shall give up her
 Dead). I have examined every Edition of our
 Prayer-Books that I have met with, to see whether
 there was a false print in any of them, to justify
 this bold Writer ; but I never could find one, and

as he could not but know the Accusation was false, I cannot expect he should be so ingenuous as to take Shame to himself, but I hope the Reader will give him such a Place in his Esteem as he deserves.

REASON VII.

“ We withdraw from the Communion of the
 “ Church of *England*, because we cannot allow of
 “ such Officers in the Church, as Diocesan, or Lord
 “ Bishops. We own all faithful Pastors of parti-
 “ cular Congregations, to be scriptural Bishops, and
 “ the Scriptures know no other. Our Lord *Jesus*
 “ *Christ* forbid it, *Mark* x. 42. 45.”

Now, tho’ this Author is very free of the Censures, which he passes upon the Clergy, whom he is pleased to charge with Ignorance, as well without Provocation, as without Reason; I must take the Liberty of saying, that he doth by no means shew his own skill in the Scriptures; for I think throughout his Piece he doth not produce so much as one Text, but what is impertinent or misapplied, and his Ignorance is not more manifest in any Part of this notable Performance, than it is in what he saith to support this seventh Reason; the Text of Scripture in which he hath the Confidence to say, our Blessed Lord forbid Episcopacy, is a flagrant instance of it, for it seems to be produced for no other End, than because of the Word *Lordship* in our Translation: And I suppose this simple Man thought *that* had some Affinity to the Title of Lord, which in *England* is now generally added to the other of Bishop.

But if I was to let his Text alone, there is one Exception; and I might shew there is one Diocesan Bishop, whom this Text could not affect, let him torture it how he will, and that is the Bishop of *Soder* and *Man*, who has no Seat in Parliament, and has not the Title of Lord given him*.

Now

* N. B. The Title of *Lord* Bishop of *Soder* and *Man* which is
 given

Now let us examine his Text; the Meaning of it will be plainly seen, by considering the Occasion of it; the two Apostles, *James* and *John*, had desired, by their Mother, that in our Saviour's Kingdom they might have the chief Management of Affairs, that they might sit the one on his right hand and the other on his left; our Lord did not grant their Petition, but yet when the other Ten heard of it they began to be much displeased with *James* and *John*; but *Jesus* to prevent the bad Consequences which might follow, put a stop to this, by calling the Ten, and assuring them they had no Reason to be displeased with the Sons of *Zebedee* for preferring that Request, for if they had obtained what they desired, the Consequence would not have been as they expected; for 'tis true, says he, *Ye know the Princes of the Gentiles exercise Dominion or Lordship over them, and their great ones have much Power over them, but so shall it not be amongst you*; for they who shall arrive to the greatest Dignity in my Kingdom, shall in Truth have the most burthenful Office, *whosoever will be great among you shall be your Minister*: In the Discharge of sacred Offices you shall attend and wait upon those whose Rulers you are; *And whosoever will be Chief shall be Servant of all*, and the higher you are advanced in Dignity, the greater Burden of Offices and Duty shall lie upon you, to attend the Wants of all your Inferiors *.

This is the natural and true Meaning of this Passage, and let any Man judge whether there is any thing in it which can be rack'd to speak against the Order of Bishops: And that the Author brought it only for that little, petty, low Reason, namely, because of the Word *Lordship* in it, is very probable

given to him in the Title of Bishop *Wilson*'s excellent little Piece upon the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is by mistake of the Bookseller, for it is a Title which he doth not claim, and which doth not belong to him.

* See Dr. Hammond upon the Text.

from

from hence, that he might as well have brought the parallel Passage in *St. Matthew*, which you know stands first in the Bible, but that would not do, it wanted the Word *Lordship*; and I have given these two Texts in one View, for the sake of the *English* Reader, assuring him that it is the very same Word in the *Greek*, which in one Place is translated exercise *Lordship*, and in the other exercise *Dominion*.

Matt. xx. 25.

Ye know that the Princes of the Gentiles exercise Dominion over them, and they that are great exercise Authority upon them.

Mark x. 42.

Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, exercise Lordship over them; and their great ones exercise Authority upon them.

Tho' the Writer says the Scriptures know no other Bishops but Pastors of particular Congregations, it is certain *Timothy* and *Titus*, and several others mentioned there were Bishops in the Sense of the Church of *England*; they were appointed to ordain others, as they were themselves ordained by the Apostles, and were to exercise an Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction over those Churches. See *St. Paul's* Epistle to them, and especially these Passages, 1 *Tim.* v. 19, to the End, 2 *Tim.* ii. 2. *Titus* i. 5, &c. *Tit.* iii. 10. And so say the Writers of Antiquity in general.

This brings me to examine what he says upon this Head; and if the Author is unlucky in the choice of his Text of Scripture, he is, if possible, ten times more so in what he says of the ancient Writers: But hear him.

“ *Athanasius* is said to be Bishop of *Alexandria*, (and a Bishop he was) [*I am glad of that*] but not a Diocesan Bishop; for he had no more Christians in his Community than might meet in one Place. So saith *Cyprian*, *Polycarp*, *Irenæus*, and *Justin Martyr*. ”

What? Do they say *Athanasius* had no more Christians in his Community than might meet in one Place?

If I had the least Opinion of the Man's honesty, I should really pity him for his Unluckiness; of all the Dioceses throughout Christendom, it is pretty odd he should stumble upon that of *Alexandria* to prove this Point; and that he should hit upon so remarkable a Man as *Athanasius*, is yet stranger; and then to assert, that those four good Men said all this of him, is rather more unfortunate still; for if he had put the Names of all the Writers of the Christian Church together, and drawn out four at random, he could not have chosen worse; this I will demonstrate:

Justin Martyr suffered Martyrdom in the Year of our Lord 166.

Polycarp, Bishop of *Smyrna*, a Disciple of St. *John's*, suffered Martyrdom in the Year 167.

Irenæus was his Disciple, and suffered in the Year 203.

Cyprian was Bishop of *Carthage*, and was beheaded in the Year 258.

Now it happened that *Athanasius* was not made Bishop of *Alexandria* till 326. And how could it enter into the Head of any Man to say, that they should write about *Athanasius*, when two of them were dead 150 Years, and he who lived the latest was dead 68 Years before *Athanasius* was Bishop of *Alexandria*; and as he was Bishop there above 40 Years, (which the Historians agree in) it is pretty certain that even *Cyprian* was dead before *Athanasius* was born*?

When a Man so meanly qualified pretends to Learning, and sets up for a Teacher of others, he makes me call to mind what St. *Paul* said of some People in his Time, 1 *Tim.* i. 7. *That they desired to be Teachers of the Law, but understood neither what they said, nor whereof they affirmed.*

Concerning the Extent of the Diocese of *Alexandria* I will give you an Account from one who must

* See Dupin's History.

be allowed to be a very good judge of Antiquity. *We may judge of the Extent of some of these Dioceses by that of Alexandria, which had first a great many Churches with Presbyters fixed upon them in the City itself, in the Time of Alexander and Athanasius, as Epiphanius more than once informs us, naming, beside the great Church, commonly called Cæsarea; those of Dionysius, Theonas, Pierius, Serapion, Dizyas, Mendidias, Annianus, Abias, and Baucalis where Arius was Presbyter. Then again it had the large Region of Mareotis belonging to it. For Athanasius says, there never had been either Bishop or Chorepiscopus in all that Region, but only Presbyters under the Bishop of Alexandria; and that they were fourteen in Number, (besides thirteen Deacons) some of which had two Villages, and others more, within their respective Parishes. Canopus was also once in this Diocese, being reckoned one of the Suburbs of Alexandria, tho' a large Place, and twelve Miles distant from it; Nicopolis also was in this Diocese, which Strabo equals to a City. Bingham's Antiquities, Book IX. c. 2.*

If he had not boasted of his Knowledge, and charged others with the Want of it, I would not have taken notice of his having shewn his Ignorance in Logick, as well as Antiquity, when he argues that “none of these could be Diocesan Bishops, because “many of them” lived near together; the dullest Creature that ever went from either of our Universities would have been ashamed of such Stuff; and as it is a way of Reasoning peculiar to this worthy Author, tho' I have sometimes paid him that Compliment before, I will beg leave hereafter to speak of him only by the Stile and Title of the *Reasoner*.

Well, but I will make it Sense for him, and suppose that he meant to say, *that some of them could not be Diocesan Bishops, because they were not above six, some five, some four, some three, and some but two Miles one from another.*

Here

Here he is so exact that one would almost think he had measured their Distances ; and yet in another place, (*p.* 25.) he seems to be pleased with a Discovery he had made in the *Revelations*, c. i. v. 5. that “ there were seven Churches in the *lesser Asia*.” In what Sense they were called distinct Churches I have elsewhere shewn, and if it will be any Satisfaction to him, I will own, there were afterwards not only seven Churches, but about four hundred in the *lesser Asia* ; and just so many Bishops, with Presbyters and Deacons under them : Indeed he may think this was a vast Number for *lesser Asia* to have, and I confess there is scarce such another Instance to be met with in the Christian World : Bishopricks were, I think, in no Place so numerous as here : But then it must be considered, that tho’ it was called *Asia the Less*, yet it extended six hundred Miles in Length, and about three hundred in Breadth ; this Geographers assure us ; as may be seen in our own Countryman *Heylin*, whose Account is very consistent with *Strabo*’s and *Pliny*’s : And Mr. *Bingham* has computed, that *one with another*, between twenty and thirty Miles may fairly be allowed for the Distance between the Seats of each of those Bishops ; but then there was a great Disproportion as to the different Extent of their several Dioceses, some of them were very large, and some again very small ; but where they were thickest, as in *Asia* properly so called, the nearest that we find any two Bishop’s Seats, is at the Distance of seven or eight Miles ; so that what he says, that some were not above six, some five, some four, some three, and some but two Miles one from another, is not true.

Now as to those Bishop’s Seats which were the nearest together, I must observe, that we cannot from thence judge with any exactness of the Extent of the Jurisdiction of their Bishops ; for the Places of their Residence, and of their principal Church, might be very near together, and yet their Jurisdiction

tion might extend to considerable Distances : The City of *Bath* is not, I think, above ten Miles from *Bristol*, and yet the Diocese of *Bath* contains above three hundred and fifty Parishes, and that of *Bristol* above two hundred and fifty Parishes : And if my Map doth not deceive me, *Bangor* and *St. Asaph* are not much farther distant ; and the little Town of *Morgan*, once a Bishoprick, under the Arch Bishop of *St. Davids*, is about the same Distance from *Landaff* : But the Question with us and the Dissenters is, as to the Nature of the Episcopal Office in the Country I am speaking of, not how far the Limits of their Bishopricks extended ; not how many Priests or Deacons they had under their Jurisdiction, but whether they exercised an Episcopal Jurisdiction or not : In *England*, tho' our Bishopricks are very irregularly and unequally divided, yet they are generally of large Extent ; and here we see they are obliged, for the better governing their respective Dioceses, to have other Officers under them ; not to mention more, they have their Archdeacons : And if instead of twenty-six Bishops which we now have in this Kingdom of *England*, we had as many as there are Archdeacons, with small Districts committed to their Care, and with the same Authority in Church-Affairs, I humbly conceive they would still be Diocesan Bishops, and the Difference would only be, that then, they might do that in Person, which now they are obliged to do by their under Officers.

But further, there is an Instance in *Ireland* which is much to our present purpose : In the Province of *Connaught*, there is a small Town called *Mayo*, which was once the Seat of a Bishop, and is now united with the Archbishoprick of *Tuam* ; and yet this Town is no more than three Miles distant from *Killala*, which not only had that Honour formerly, but is at present the Seat of a Bishop ; These are a great deal nearer than any of the Seats of the *Asian* Bishops.

And

And if we make the most of what can be said about the *Asian* Bishopricks, if we take them at the nearest, if we suppose them to be not above eight Miles asunder, and that some of their Jurisdictions did not extend above four Miles from the Place of their Residence; yet it must be allowed that that Part of *Asia* where there were so many Bishopricks, was extremely populous; more so by far, than any Part of this Kingdom, a little way from *London*: Nevertheless, in the Country Town where I now am, if we take the neighbouring Parishes for four Miles round, they amount to above twenty, exclusive of the twelve Churches in the Town, which is said formerly to have had fourteen; And that in a Country by no means the most populous, (part of it being a barren Heath): if therefore each of those *Asian* Bishops had no more Priests and Deacons under them, than what might supply 20 Churches, besides the Town in which they resided, yet he was a Diocesan Bishop in our Sense of the Word: So that tho' some of them lived near together, what the *Reasoner* says, that therefore *none of them* were Diocesan Bishops, is so far from being true, that it is plain *they all* might be so *.

He says further, we read of two Bishops *in their Bishopricks*, “in the same City at the same Time,” *Phil. i. 1.*” but if the Reader will be pleased to turn to the Place, he will see that there is not a Word about their being *in their Bishopricks*: They might be Bishops of different Places assembled at *Philippi*, (the chief City of that Part of *Macedonia*, Acts xvi. 12.) as our Bishops often are in *London*, and St. Paul knowing they were there, might very well direct his Epistle to them.

There is indeed some Reason to think, that *Epaphroditus*, who carried the Epistle to the *Philippians*, was the proper Bishop of that Church; for they are directed to receive him in the Lord, c. ii. v. 29. and

* See the Postscript.

the Word translated *Messenger*, v. 25. is in the *Greek* Apostle: Now *Theodoret*, who wrote in the fifth Century, assures us, they who are now [in his Time] called Bishops, were [formerly] called Apostles. See *Whitby* on *Phil.* ii. 25.

However, I am ready to acknowledge, that in the Apostle's Time, Presbyters were called Bishops, as they very well might be, that Word signifying no more than *Overseers*. But this doth by no means prove, that there was not at the same Time an Order of Officers in the Church, superior to Presbyters; who had the Power of Ordination vested in them, and exercised a Jurisdiction over the Presbyters themselves; such were the Twelve Apostles, and such were *Timothy* and *Titus*, and others.

To this superior Order the Name of Bishops (which had before been used in common for other Church Officers) was soon afterwards appropriated; when, out of Reverence to the blessed Twelve, they declined the venerable Title of Apostles. That this happened very soon, appears from hence; that the three Orders are plainly distinguished, and called by the Names of *Bishop*, *Priest*, and *Deacon*, by *Ignatius*, who wrote in the Year of our Lord 107 or 108 *. So that it will puzzle the *Reasoner* to shew how it makes for his Cause, if we allow that those who are called Bishops, *Phil.* i. 1. were no more than Presbyters.

Besides, it is well known, that oftentimes when a Bishop was very aged or infirm, he had another Bishop ordained as a Coadjutor to assist him in the Care of his Diocese; so that the *Reasoner's* Conclusion, that because there were sometimes two Bishops in a City, therefore these were no more than private

* *Ignatius* distinguishes the three Orders of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, in Epistle to the Church of *Smyrna*, Sect. 8. to *Polyearp*, Sect. 6. to the *Ephesians*, Sect. 2. to the *Philadelphians*, five or six times. Nay further, the Superiority of the Bishops above the Presbyters is plainly asserted by him in Epistle to the *Magesians*, Sect. 6. and Epistle to the *Trallians*, Sect. 2. 3.

Pastors, is pretty near a-kin to that I just now mentioned in a former Paragraph.

And I will venture further to say, that none of the Writers which he mentions will vouch the Truth of what he says they will. *Cyprian* was himself Bishop of *Carthage*, and tho' for that Reason he is by far a better Witness in this case, than he was in the Affair of *Albanasius*, (because he happened to be dead before *Albanasius* was born) I say, tho' I grant he is a very good Witness in this Point, I defy the *Reasoner* to produce such a Testimony from him.

Any Man who has read *Cyprian's* Epistles, must know, that he frequently mentions and distinguishes the three Orders of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons *, and that he actually exercised an Authority over them; for he threatens to excommunicate any Priests or Deacons, who shall presume to communicate with those who had fallen [to Idolatry] before they had received his Directions concerning it †; he deputed two Bishops, *Caldonius* and *Herculanus*, with two Presbyters, *Rogatianus* and *Numidicus*, to declare *Felicissimus*, a Presbyter, excommunicate, and one *Augendus* his Associate, which they accordingly acquainted him, Ep. 42. they had done ||. These
Passages

* Si qui de peregrinis *Episcopi* Collegæ mei, vel *Presbyteri*, vel *Diaconi* præsentés fuerint, vel supervenerint, hæc omnia de vobis audiant. Ep. 32. p. 65. Ed. Ox.

† Interea si quis immoderatus, et præceps, sive de nostris Presbyteris vel Diaconibus, sive de peregrinis, ausus fuerit ante sententiam nostram communicare cum lapsis, a Cœmmunicatione nostrâ arceatur. Ep. 34. p. 68. In a Letter to the Priests and Deacons at *Rome*, having given them an Account of the Care he had taken of the Church of *Carthage*, he adds, Item Presbyteris et Diaconibus non desuit Sacerdotii vigor, ut quidam minus disciplinæ memores & temerariâ festinatione præcipientes, qui cum lapsis communicare cœperant, comprimerentur. And in Ep. 17. he has these Words, Audio tamen quosdam de Presbyteris, nec Evangelii memores, nec quid ad nos Martyres scripserint cogitantes, nec Episcopo honorem Sacerdotii sui et Cathedræ reservantes, jam cum lapsis communicare cœpisse.

|| He sent *Caldonius* and *Herculanus*, two Bishops, with *Rogatianus*
Numidicus

Passages may serve as a Specimen of what you may expect from *Cyprian* upon this Head. But as I have mentioned him, I will give one Quotation more, which will shew his Opinion as to what we were speaking of just now, about there being two Bishops in one City. He gives this Reason why *Novatianus* could not be Bishop of *Rome*, because *Cornelius* was ordained first, and there could not be two: *Since there cannot be a second [Bishop] after the first, whoever is made [Bishop] after one is made already, (who ought to be alone) he is not a second, but no Bishop at all **.

It is certain *Clemens Romanus* describes the Ministration of the Officers in the Christian Church, by an Allusion taken from the distinct Officers of High Priest, Priest, and Levites among the *Jews*, Ep. I. c. 40. And as to those Places where he mentions only Bishops and Deacons, what I said before should be remembered, *viz.* That in the Time of the Apostles, when he wrote, Bishops were sometimes called Apostles; and Presbyters, Bishops: So that the Bishops and Deacons which he speaks of, c. xlii, &c, were probably no more than Priests and Deacons. And as an instance of what you may expect from *Origen*, I will give you a short Quotation from him, as *Mr. Bingham* has translated him.

Every one shall be punished according to the Difference of his Degree; if a Bishop or President of the Church sins, he shall have the greater Punishment; a Catechumen will deserve Mercy, in comparison of a Believer; and a Layman, in comparison of a Deacon; and a Deacon, in comparison of a Presbyter: Origen here mentions five distinct Orders or Degrees in the Church, Bishops, Pres-

tianus and *Numidicus* two Presbyters, as his Vicars or Deputies, as he tells them; cum ego vos pro me vicarios miserim, to settle the Affairs of the Church: And in their answer, which was in Consequence of this Appointment, they acquaint him with their having excommunicated *Felicissimus* and five other Presbyters, *Vide*, Ep. 41. 42, 43.

* Cum post primum secundus [Episcopus] esse non possit, quisquis post unum qui solus esse debeat, factus est; non jam secundus ille, sed nullus est. Ep. 55. p. 104.

byters, Deacons, Laymen baptized, or Believers, Catechumens, or the Candidates for Baptism *. Therefore let the Reader judge what sort of Testimony we should have from him in this Point; and, upon the whole, I can only admire that the *Reasoner* could think to put off such Stuff upon his Readers, without being detected and exposed for it.

REASON VIII.

“ We cannot allow that the Bishop or Patron should impose a Pastor upon any Parish, without the Consent and Choice of the People.” &c.

It is not quite clear what Right the People, in the early Ages of Christianity, exercised in the Choice of their Clergy; but if it ever was the Custom for them to choose, it hath for good Reasons been altered; some of which will be mentioned. As to the Resemblance, which he thinks very near, between choosing a Pastor for a Congregation, and a Husband for a Wife; I will only say, if the Lord of a Manor was to choose a good Husband for a Woman, she would have no Reason to complain; and how near soever he may think the Resemblance between these two Cases, there is at least this Difference; if a Woman's Husband proves a bad one, she cannot get rid of him, it is Death alone must part them; and therefore it is but right the choice should be wholly her own; But in the other Case it is otherwise; if, amongst us, the Minister proves a bad Man, neglects his Charge, or misbehaves, the People have their Remedy, they may complain, and, upon mak-

* Pro modo Graduum unusquisque torquebitur; majorem Pœnam habet, qui Ecclesiæ præsidet et delinquit. An non magis Misericordiam præmeretur ad comparationem fidelis, Catechumenus? Non magis venia dignus est Laicus, si ad Diaconum conferatur? Et rursus comparatione Presbyteri, Diaconus veniam plus meretur. *Orig. Hom. 5. in Ezech.* And again he says, ab Ecclesiasticis Dignitatibus, non solum Fornicatio, sed et Nuptiæ repellunt, neque enim Episcopus, nec Presbyter, nec Diaconus possunt esse Digami. *Orig. Hom. 17. in Luc.*

ing good the Charge, such a Minister will be punished : He may be suspended, or deprived, and a proper Man sent in his room ; and to make this Matter easier to them, frequent Enquiries are made by the Bishop, or his Officers, particularly at his Visitations, whether there are any such Complaints or not ; and all this is regular and well.

But let us see as to the other Way among the Dissenters : The Election of their Ministers is made, either by the Congregation at large, or by a select Number of them : The last I have been told is the most usual Method ; and I fain would know what Right those *few* have to choose a Minister for the rest of the Congregation ? And when the *Reasoner* tells me that, I will shew it is more reasonable for the private Patron to recommend a Clergyman to the Bishop to be appointed Minister of a Parish, than it is for those few to choose no Body knows who, to be the Pastor of the whole Congregation.

For, *First*, The Patron must choose a Clergyman who has been regularly ordain'd to execute the Ministerial Office ; and therefore he is one who has been judged by the Bishop that ordain'd him to be a proper Person for such a Charge. And

Secondly, The Patron only recommends a Clergyman to the Bishop to be appointed by him, and before the Care of a Parish is committed to him, he is examin'd by the Bishop as to his Abilities, and he must produce proper Certificates of his good Life and Conversation. And what greater Care can be taken that proper Persons should be appointed for the Discharge of the Ministerial Office ? I will appeal to the Dissenters themselves, whether it is not more likely that an improper Person should be chosen amongst them, when they who choose them must oftentimes be allowed to be very incompetent Judges : And if the Teacher be chosen by the Congregation at large, then the Choice is likely to be still more precarious. I grant that private Persons choose their own Physicians,

ficians, but it is a notorious Truth, that the common People do generally run to Quacks.

Lastly, I observe in the Words of Dr. *Stillingfleet*, That if all the People were left to choose their own Pastors, it is not to be imagined what Parties and Factions, what mutual Hatreds and perpetual Animosities they would naturally fall into on such Occasions. Do we not daily see such Things to be the Fruit of popular Elections? Which being the natural Effects of Men's Passions, stirred up by such Occasions, and there being so much Experience of it in all Ages of the Christian Church where such Things have been; I am as certain that Christ never gave the People an unalterable Right of choosing their own Ministers, as I am, that he designed to have the Unity and Peace of the Church preserved*.

These lamentable Effects are still but too visible in those Parishes where the People have the Right of choosing, and the Dissenters cannot but be sensible of it amongst themselves.

R E A S O N IX.

“We dissent from the Church of *England*, because
“we think it wants godly Discipline, &c.”

Under this Head the *Reasoner* vents much Malice, and indulges himself in the Exercise of that Talent, in the Use of which he seems (as far as I can judge) to excell all others that I have seen; I mean, that of throwing about foul Words, and abusive Language. As this is a Way of arguing to which (I must own) I have not been accustomed, I hope the Reader will excuse me, if I here take no other Notice of it, than to give him the same Reproof which was once given to the worst of Creatures, *Jude 9. the Lord Rebuke thee.*

Nevertheless, I will be so ingenuous as to allow, that our Discipline is not quite so regular and exact, as our best Friends may wish; but then those Dissenters which make this a Pretence for separating from

* *Stillingfleet's* Unreasonableness of Separation, Part III.

us, should consider these three Things following, as they are well advised by an excellent Writer in these Words :

1. *That this [a strict Discipline] is much more difficult in a National Church, than in one of their Societies. For none side with them but what do it out of some Zeal; whether it be a true and godly Zeal, or an ignorant and factious one, still it is Zeal; and may be made Use of to a vigorous Execution of the Orders past among them. But there is in all Nations, besides the zealous Men, a sort of flying Squadron that have really no Concern at all for any Religion, but being perfectly indifferent, do of course fall in with the National Church, as being the most fashionable at that Time. These wherever they light, are a great Hindrance to the due Execution of any Canons for Discipline; they are either by their Riches and Power too big, or else by their Number too many for the Force of the Law: The Dissenters, notwithstanding the Boasts of their Exactness of Discipline, would find themselves embarrass'd, if this were their Case.*

If a candid and serious Dissenter reflects upon what is here said, he will perceive, it is unfair and unjust, therefore he ought not to consider every Man who doth not call himself a Dissenter, as being of the Church of *England*: A Man who has no Religion, should not properly be ranked among those of any Church; and therefore, when the *Reasoner*, with his usual Politeness, bids the Clergy, (*Plain Reasons*, p. 39.) search the Alehouses, the Goals, and the Gallows, for those of our Communion, he only shews he hath as little regard to Truth and Justice, as he hath to good Manners. But to return to my Author. The Dissenters should consider,

2. *That tho' the Scripture does command Churches to excommunicate wicked Men, yet it does not allow private Men to make Separations from a Church that does not duly practice that Command. Let a Man take Care that he does not deserve, by his own Wickedness, to be turned out of the Church: And if others, who do deserve it, be not,*
upon

upon a Motion made, turned out; that is not his Fault, nor will be imputed to him. The Church of Corinth was faulty in this, when St. Paul wrote his first Epistle to them; and tho' he does there reprove them for this Fault, yet at the Time of his second Epistle, there were still very wicked Men, whom they had not yet turned out; and yet in both his Epistles he charges that none go about to make any Division. And from that Time to this Time there has been no Church free from these Spots in the Feasts of Charity. It is indeed impossible for any Church, while it is in this World, absolutely to free itself. In the mean Time private Christians are advised to withdraw their Familiarity and Conversation from those that they know to be such. And so far every private Man has the Power of Excommunication in his own Breast.

3. That whereas there are but four sorts of Men whom the Scripture does command to be Excommunicated: 1. Idolaters, Unbelievers, Teachers of false Doctrine in the Fundamentals of the Faith. 2. Men of vicious and immoral Lives. 3. Such as in Points of Trespasses or Differences between Man and Man, will not hear the Church. And 4thly. Those that make Divisions in or from a Church: The dissenting and dividing Parties should, amidst all the Zeal that they shew for executing the Law upon the three first Sorts, remember that the Law is as full, as plain, as peremptory against the fourth sort, as against any of the other. For there is not a Text in all the Scripture that is plainer against any Sin, than is that of St. Paul. Rom. xvi. 17. Now I beseech you, Brethren, mark those which cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. Therefore he that thinks Adultery to be a Sin, and Drunkenness to be a Sin, &c. and Schism to be none; or that a Man is to be avoided or excommunicated for the one, but not for the other, is one that does not take Christ's Commands as they lie in Scripture, but picks out some that he will observe, and others that he will slight; according as they please

please or displease his Humour. The Word of God is, that every one should avoid, or separate from him, that goes about to make a Separation.

The Dissenters, if they apply this, will be inclined to a little more Moderation and Charity in the Censures that they pass upon National Churches, for their Want of so severe a Discipline as they call for *.

The most ridiculous Reason of all is the last.

REASON X.

“ We leave the Communion of the Church of England, because it hath often shewn a persecuting Spirit in it, &c.”

Now to say nothing as to the Insufficiency of this as a Reason for Separation, it must be allowed to make very much for the Credit of the present Members of the Church of England, that even such a Writer as the *Reasoner* cannot find in his Heart to say, that *they* shew a persecuting Spirit : This is a tacit Confession, that there is not at present, so much as the least Pretence for this Plea ; and as Persecution hath ever been the darling Cry of the Dissenters, when that is given up, it must be looked upon as the most prevailing Argument, that they have no more to complain of on that Head : So that if what he says, *That the Church of England hath often shewn a persecuting Spirit*, had been never so true ; this shews he had worked up all his Materials in his other nine Reasons, and was miserably put to it for another, when he made this the tenth : For it is to the full as ridiculous to make this an Objection to us, as it would be for a Man to quarrel with me, because my Father, had formerly, thrashed him for his Unluckiness, when he was a Boy.

But if I was to demand of the *Reasoner* the Instances in which this *persecuting Spirit* was shewn, I make no doubt but I should have something to offer,

* Wall's History of Infant Baptism, 2d Edit. p. 455.

if not sufficient, fully to justify our Fore-fathers, yet surely, to abate much of this heavy Charge.

It is the more surprizing to hear this Accusation brought against our Church, because it immediately puts a Man upon recollecting what was the Behaviour of the Dissenters, when they were in Power. Was I to look into the horrid Transactions of the last Century, I should be furnished with Materials which would abundantly convince the most prejudiced Man, that neither of the two most prevailing Sects, (the *Presbyterians* and *Independents*) ought in Prudence, to provoke any Man to this : But I decline that Task, tho' an easy one, not only because it is to me disagreeable in itself, and I think, unfair in some Measure, to brand the present Generation with the Crimes of their Predecessors ; but because it would tend only towards the widening of our Breaches, instead of healing them : Let those Things rather be buried in Oblivion ; and I beseech our Dissenting Brethren, not so much to study, what they can find in History, which had they been living then, they *would have* complained of ; but rather to consider, that *they* have nothing of this sort to complain of now.

We are now come to the End of the *Ten Reasons for dissenting*, and I hope the Reader is convinced they are far from being sufficient to justify a Man for separating himself from our Communion ; and consequently if he doth so, he is guilty of Schism : At the End of them, the *Reasoner* again throws out a little more against our Ceremonies, and insists, *that indifferent Things ought to be left so, and not enjoined*. In answer to which it would be sufficient to say, that if all indifferent Things in the Worship of God were not to be determined, but every Man was left to behave according to his own particular Fancy, that would destroy all Order and Decency ; for every Man who knows what he means by those Words, must perceive, that Order and Decency in the Worship of God, consists in the regular and proper Use
of

of those indifferent Things ; And How can Things be done regularly, if they are done by no Rule ?

But further, if I can shew that indifferent Things, which relate to the Worship of God, may be lawfully enjoined, and that what is so enjoined may be lawfully complied with, then I hope the Reader will be thoroughly satisfied in this Point.

In those things which relate to our Practice, whatsoever is commanded is Matter of Duty ; whatsoever is forbidden is Sin ; and whatsoever is neither commanded, nor forbidden, is neither Matter of Duty, nor is it sinful, *i. e.* it is indifferent : This is the true Notion of an indifferent Thing.

Now in the regular Performance of the publick Worship of Almighty God, in relation to these *indifferent* Things, neither commanded, nor forbidden ; the five following Particulars are evident :

1. Some certain Time must be fixed when Men are to meet.

2. Some certain Place must be appointed to meet at.

3. Some Order or Method must be agreed upon ; such as, when to pray, when to read the Scriptures, when to sing Psalms, when to Preach, &c. or there can be no regularity.

4. The officiating Minister must have some Habit or other.

5. Some Gesture, or Posture or other is necessary, such as Sitting, or Standing, or Kneeling, &c.

And as it is very proper that these Things should be settled and fixed, in order to the more regular Performance of the publick Worship ; and as these Things are not particularly appointed by our Saviour and his Apostles in holy Writ ; it is plain they are left to be determined by the lawful Governors of the Church, according to Christian Prudence, and the general Rules which are given in Scripture : Those general Rules the Apostle Paul gives us, *1 Cor. xiv. 26. Let all Things be done to edifying ; and v. 40. Let all Things be done decently and in order.* In fixing

therefore these particular indifferent Things, the Governors of the Church are to have Regard to those Rules, and no other; and if they appoint them in such a manner as they judge will best tend to Edification, to Decency, and to Order; doubtless, as there is no other Rule, our Governors do right in observing the Injunctions of the Apostles, and we do right in obeying the lawful Commands of our Superiors.

For, that indifferent Things in relation to the Worship of God, may lawfully be appointed; and that it is lawful for us to comply with that Appointment; will be further evident, from the known Practice of the *Jews*, and from our Saviour his not only not condemning them for it, but actually conforming in such Matters himself: I will give two Instances of this, which may be sufficient, because the Reason of the Thing holds the same as to the three other of the five Particulars before mentioned.

It must be allowed, the Worship of the *Jews* was very exactly commanded by Almighty God; and therefore it might seem the less justifiable in them to *add to*, or *alter* those Rules he gave them; than it can possibly be for our Church, (which hath not received any such particular Directions from God,) to *make* Rules for itself.

And yet the Feast of the Dedication was *not* appointed by Almighty God, and was no more than a human Ordinance of the *Jewish* Church; nevertheless it is certain, our Saviour complied with the *Jews* in the Observance of it; and was present in the Temple at that very Feast, as we read, *In. x. 22, 23.* From hence any Man may see, it is lawful to appoint Religious Days, altho' they be not directed in the written Word of God; and that it is lawful to comply with the Observance of them when they are appointed; for this was actually done by the *Jewish* Church, in the Case of the abovementioned Feast: And every Man must grant, if there had been any thing in the
least

least sinful, either in the first Appointment, or in the Compliance with that Appointment afterwards, our Saviour would not have justified the Practice, by complying with it himself.

The other Instance I shall give, in relation to the Observance of these indifferent Things, shall be, the *change* of the Posture in which the Primitive *Jews* eat the Passover.

According to the Command, *Ex. xii. 11.* They were to eat it *with their Loins girt, their Shoes on their Feet, their Staff in their Hands, and in Haste*; and agreeably to this Command, for many Years they continued, as they first began, to eat it *standing*.

But after the Captivity they did *not* eat it *standing*, but in a discumbing Posture, or lying along, as was mentioned, *p. 41.* a Posture by no means suitable to the Words of the Commandment; and in this likewise our Lord complied: From whence it is easy to observe, that these indifferent Circumstances may be altered and varied, and others lawfully used in their stead, as human Prudence shall direct; and thus the Governors of the Church may lawfully vary and alter our Rites and Ceremonies, as they shall judge them to tend most to Order, Decency, and Edification; and when they are fixed by them, it cannot be unlawful for us to comply with them, because we have our Saviour's Example for it in a like Case.

Indeed there is no one Church upon Earth, but what does, nor can there be one but what must, use some Things in a Religious Way, and which relate to the Worship of God, that are not directed by the Word of God; because no *particular* Directions are given there. And if this be a Fault, (as it is plain it is not) those People who talk most in this way, the *Independents*, are themselves guilty of it: For what Reason have they for sprinkling, or Affusion of Water in the Sacrament of Baptism, more than from the Reason of the Thing, and the Practice of the Church in cold Climates? Where do they

they find a Command for the necessary Use of *conceived* Prayer? And that, *that* and no other shall be used in the Worship of God? What Command, or what Warrant in Scripture is there for a *Church Covenant* as they call it? Did they receive *this* of the Lord *Jesus Christ*? What Command have they for the Posture of *sitting* at the Lord's Supper, or what Example for it? Unless they are ignorant of the common Usage of those Times, and take Advantage of the *English* Translation, See p. 41. And if all Christians are obliged to keep up the original Forms and Ceremonies, and to observe them and no other, Why do they not receive it late in the Evening? And in an Upper Chamber? And give it to Men only? All which are Circumstances which were observed at the first Institution of it. I am tired with observing these Things, and I could tire the Reader with abundance more to the same purpose; but this may be enough to shew him, that when our Adversaries pretend it is unlawful for the Governors of the Church to appoint things not prescribed in Scripture, and unlawful for Men to comply with such Appointments, it is plain they impose upon their Disciples: For they themselves do things in the Worship of God, for which they have no Authority from Scripture, and therefore, by their own Practice, do apparently contradict this false Pretence*.

I must here add one Word in answer to a Text of Scripture, in which the *Reasoner* says, "We have
 "an express Charge not to have any thing to do
 "with such Things" *i. e.* with human Ceremonies. A like Text he produced before, which I had Occasion to observe, was nothing to his purpose; and it is as evident; that the Liberty which *St. Paul* directs the *Galatians* to stand fast in, is the Christian Liberty which they had, in Opposition to the *Jewish* Yoke of Bondage; that vast Multitude of burthensome Ceremonies, which were so strictly enjoined by the Law

* See London Cases of indifferent Things.

of *Moses* : It was called Christian Liberty, because the *Jews* were by the coming of Christ, freed from those irksome Observances of the Law, and were reinstated in that Liberty which all Mankind had, before it was restrained by *Moses*. And that this, and this only was St. *Paul's* Meaning, will appear by adding the two next Verses, to what this Man hath injudiciously picked out : *Gal. v. 1, 2. 3. Stand fast therefore in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not intangled again with the Yoke of Bondage : Behold, I Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing ; for I testify again to every Man that is circumcised, that he is a Debtor to do the whole Law.* What can be plainer, than that the Apostle is arguing against Circumcision, and the Observance of the Ceremonial Law, which Things were abolished by the Coming of Christ ? And what Relation can this possibly have to the Appointment of such human Ceremonies as are enjoined by our Superiors, in Obedience to the Apostles Command, of having the Worship of God performed with Decency and Order ?

He again attacks our Ceremonies in the fourth of his six curious *Reasons, Why Dissenters are not, nor can be guilty of Schism, &c.* Where he produces two Quotations (as he says) from Bishop *Stillingfleet's Irenicum*.

Concerning which I must observe, that in the first of them the Bishop only saith, what St. *Paul* expresses otherwise, *Rom. xiv. 14.* where he says, *there is nothing unclean of itself ; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean :* And as to the Second, that these are not the Words of Bishop *Stillingfleet* ; but if they were, it is very unfair to produce them as such, because the Bishop hath apologized for that Book, by saying, that it was written *when he was very young* ; and in the Preface to his *Unreasonableness of Separation*, he effectually prevents an ingenuous Man from making Use of any Expression in that Book, in Defence of the Separation.

tion. As to the *Reasoner's* Remarks upon the forged Words of Bishop *Stillingfleet*, they contain some of the vilest Slander that I have seen : For it is not so much as pretended, that there is any Holiness in our Garments, and there is no Direction in our Liturgy, for the officiating Minister to turn with his Face either to the East or West, as a *Kebla*, or Point of Worship.

And as to his ridiculous and trifling Distinction between Praying and Singing, I would only ask the Man this Question : Whether when he sings the 51st *Psalms* in Metre, he asks Mercy of God, or gives him Thanks for it ?

Now if any Person who hath been deceived and misguided by the *Plain Reasons*, shall after cool Reflection upon what hath been said, be persuaded that he hath not a just Reason for Separating from our Communion ; let him be assured, if he continueth to separate from us, his Separation is sinful, and he must one Day answer for the Crime ; the Act of Toleration, or any thing therein contained notwithstanding.

For if Schism be a Sin by the Law of God ; not all the human Laws upon Earth can make that no Sin, which God hath made so : And all the Intention of the Act, *commonly called* the Act of Toleration, (for the Word *Toleration* is not in it) is to relieve Dissenters from some Temporal Punishments, which by some other Acts of Parliament they were before subject to ; but as to the Sinfulness of the Separation, it did not pretend to meddle with that ; and it would have been highly ridiculous (I might call it worse) if it had ; it is not a Temporal Judgment Seat, but the other ; the great Tribunal in the next World, before which we shall be judged, for this, amongst other Sins, so declared in God's holy Word : And he must be unworthy the Name of a Christian, who can think an Act of Parliament can exempt him from the Sentence of that : By this the
Reasoner

Reasoner shews his great Skill in Divinity; as he doth further in the next Page, where he hath the Sagacity to discover, that the present Corruptions of the Church of *Rome* are as old as the Apostles Time; from its being said, *2 Thess. ii. 7. The Mystery of Iniquity doth already work.*

But I will forbear, and not be tempted to follow this Author any further; since, as I said, every thing material in his third Part hath already been considered, and this little Piece is already swelled to a larger Size, than I at first intended it should.

There is abundance of ill Language thrown out upon the Clergy in the few Pages that are left, and such Language they must ever expect from such a Writer: It has been well said, that the Clergy would want one of the Badges of Honour belonging to their Office, were they not thus reproachfully used: It is Part of the State which belongs to the true Ministers of the Gospel, to be followed by some; who by their virulent Speeches are so far their Friends, as to free them from the Curse which our Saviour pronounceth, *Wo be unto you when all Men speak well of you.* Stillingfleet.

Finally, I entreat the Reader, if he be a Dissenter, or is the least inclined to separate from the Church of *England*, attentively to read, and deliberately to consider, what I shall now say to him in few Words, concerning the Nature and Sinfulness of Schism; and that I may be the better understood; and the thing set in a clear Method, I will prove these four Things:

1. That the Christian Church, or the Church of Christ, throughout the World, is but one Society or one Body, of which *Jesus Christ* is the Head.

2. That every one who is a Member of that one Society, the Christian Church, is made so by Baptism.

3. That every Member of that one Society, is bound to do all he can to preserve the Peace and Unity of it. And therefore

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4. That

4. That it is very sinful to make Divisions in it, and to break the Peace of it.

And in doing this, I will not follow the Example of the *Plain Reasoner*; I will not bring Texts of Scripture quite foreign to the Matter I am upon; nor will I torture and pervert the Meaning of those I do bring; nor will I take Advantage of the Sound of a Word, or the accidental Use of it in the *English* Translation; nor pick out a Scrap of a Sentence which shall speak differently from the whole of it: But I will shew you all this by clear and plain Texts of Scripture, easy to be understood, and such as every unlearned Reader may see, by turning to his Bible, have not another Meaning there different from that which I here give them; but that they do really relate to the very Thing which I produce them for; so that your own Eyes, and your own Reason may convince you, that *what I say is Truth*.

First, I am to prove, that the Christian Church, or the Church of Christ, throughout the World, is but one Society, or one Body, of which *Jesus Christ* is the Head.

Our Lord *Jesus Christ* said to one of his Apostles, *Matt. xvi. 18. Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church*; accordingly when the Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles at *Jerusalem*, the same Apostle *Peter* preached unto the People, and the same Day were added to the Number of Christians there (which we were told before, *Acts i. 15. were about a Hundred and Twenty*) about three thousand Souls, *Acts ii. 41. and v. 47. The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved*. At another Sermon of the same Apostle *Peter's*, five thousand more believed, *Acts iv. 4. And after this we read, Acts vi. 7. The Number of Disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem*; and all these Multitudes are called, *Acts viii. 1. The Church which was at Jerusalem*; and *Acts v. 11. it is said, Fear came on all the Church*. After this the Apostles dispersed themselves, and converted great Multitudes

Multitudes, in the Region round about, and in many Places far distant from *Jerusalem*; and tho' the Number of Christians in every great City was, for Distinction sake, called the Church of that City; (and so we read of the Church of *Antioch*, the Church of *Ephesus*, the Church of *Laodicea*, &c.) yet every new Believer was only *added* to the former Original Church at *Jerusalem*, and all those particular Churches were esteemed Members of the one same Spiritual Society, the Church of Christ; and were united together by some Bands of Union common to them all; and were all considered only as so many different Parts or Members of the same Body; as you may plainly perceive by these Texts following.

It is said of St. *Paul*, nay, he says it of himself, 1 Cor. xv. 9. and Gal. i. 13. *That he persecuted the Church of God*, i. e. all Christians in every Place without Distinction, wherever he found them; see his History in the Acts of the Apostles. 1 Cor. xii. 28. he says, *God hath set some in the Church*, 1. *Apostles*. 2. *Teachers*, &c. and Eph. iii. 10. *To the Intent that the manifold Wisdom of God might be known in the Church*, and v. 21. *unto him [God] be Glory in the Church by Christ Jesus*.

And *Jesus Christ* is called the Head of this one Society, in the Texts following: Eph. i. 22, 23. *And gave him [Jesus Christ] to be the Head over all Things, to the Church which is his Body*. Eph. v. 23. *Christ is the Head of the Church*. Col. i. 18. *And he is the Head of the Body the Church*; and v. 24. *for his Body's sake, which is the Church, whereof I am made a Minister*. I give you but a few Texts out of a great many more which I could produce, but I must add one more, Eph. ii. 19, 20, 21. where speaking of those who are Members of the Church, the Apostle says, *They are Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God, and are built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the Chief Corner Stone, in whom all the*
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Building

Building fitly framed together, groweth unto a Holy Temple in the Lord. Here you see the Apostle Paul very fitly likeneth the Church of Christ, the Body of Christians, to a great Building : (perhaps in Allusion to those Words of our Lord to *Peter*, Matt. xvi. 18.) And you know a great Building consists of several Apartments and Rooms, and every one of those Rooms is composed of several Stones, but are all built and framed upon one Foundation ; and so the Christian Church consists of all particular Churches, and each of those of so many Christians, but all together make but one Society, or one Building, founded upon that grand Foundation, *than which no Man can lay any other*, Jesus Christ.

And as all Christians compose one Church, as having one Lord, so they may be considered as one Society, inasmuch as they profess the same Faith ; *Eph. iv. 5.* and are Partakers of the same Sacraments ; for so the Apostle argues for Unity, *There is but one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism* : And as to the other Sacrament we all eat and drink of it, and thereby our Union appears as the same Apostle speaks, *1 Cor. x. 17. We being many are one Bread and one Body ; for we are all Partakers of that one Bread.* And thus Millions and Millions of Persons, and Churches, howsoever distinguished by Time or Place, are all to be considered as one Society, and one Church, and do agree with the Description of the first Church at *Jerusalem* : I mean, so long as they *continue steadfastly in the Apostle's Doctrine, and in Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayer.*

From these plain Texts of Scripture thus laid together, any Man of common Sense may perceive, that the Notion advanced by the *Reasoner*, viz. " That each Church must consist of no more Members than can meet together to Worship God in " one Place," is quite different from the Scriptural Notion of the Church, nay, is directly opposite to it. And as the Christian Church at large is in this manner

ner composed of all the Christian Churches throughout the World, all which are joined together and united by those common Bands of Union before-mentioned, in which they all agree ; so no particular Church is to be considered as distinct from the Church of Christ in general, any otherwise than as it is distinguished by its Government under one particular Head, or Bishop : It is in this sense that we speak of the Church of *London*, the Church of *Rockester*, the Church of *Norwich*, &c. and each of these may if you please be called Parts of the Church of *Canterbury*, because each of the Bishops of those Churches, are in some particulars subject to the Bishop of *Canterbury* as their Metropolitan.

Now as the Church of *Canterbury* may be said to consist of every particular Diocese under the Jurisdiction of the Archbishop, so every one of those Divisions consists of all the particular Parishes under the Jurisdiction of their respective Bishops ; and if any Person is admitted a Member of the Church in any one Part of it, he thereby becomes related to the whole ; and is to be considered, first, as a Member of the Parish in which he lives, then of the Diocese in which that Parish is, &c. and so of the Christian Church in general, or the Catholick Church : This leads me naturally to the second Thing, namely,

2. To shew you, that every one who is a Member of that one Society, the Christian Church, is made so by Baptism.

And as one or two plain Texts are as good or better than five hundred which are less pertinent, I will give you only these : 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. *For as the Body is one and hath many Members, and all the Members of that one Body, being many, are one Body, so also is Christ : For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free. The grand Commission given to the Apostles, Matt. xxviii. 19. was, to make Disciples of all Nations by baptizing them ; and agreeably to this*
St. Paul

St. Paul declares, *Gal. iii. 27.* *As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ; there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither Male nor Female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.* All which Places do plainly shew, that the Instrument whereby we are made Members of the Christian Church, is Baptism.

Thirdly then, I am to produce some plain Texts of Scripture, in which it will appear, that every Member of the Christian Church, that one Society into which he was admitted at Baptism, is bound to do all he can to preserve the Peace and Unity of it.

Our Lord himself commanded his Disciples, *Mark ix. 50.* *To have Peace one with another.* St. Paul says, *Thessal. i Ep. v. 13.* *Be at Peace among yourselves;* and *2 Cor. xiii. 11.* *Be of one Mind, live in Peace, and the God of Peace shall be with you.* *Eph. iv. 3.* He bids them *keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.* And I beg you would observe with what Tendernefs and Concern the Apostle applieth to the *Philippians, c. ii. 1, 2.* *If there be any Consolation in Christ, if any Comfort of Love, if any Fellowship of the Spirit, if any Bowels and Mercies, fulfil ye my Joy, that ye be likeminded, being of one accord, and of one Mind.* i. e. as we say, unanimous.

Now if any Person withdraws from the Communion and publick Service of the Church, and sets up another Method of Worship, and joins himself to other Societies under another Government, and in Opposition to that in which he liveth, how can he be said to have regard to the Apostles Directions? On the contrary, be assured, that if any Person doth so, upon any other Account than this; namely, because the Church from which he separates requireth something *sinful*, as a Condition of her Communion; then such Separation is *sinful*, it is *causeless*, and he who so separates is guilty of Schism; and you will allow he cannot be well guilty of a greater Sin, if
you

you believe the Scriptures, and seriously consider those Passages which follow, in which I will shew

Fourthly, That it is very sinful to make Divisions in the Church, and thereby to break the Peace of it.

The Sinfulness of this Practice might be gathered from many Texts which have been already produced; and will easily appear by considering, that it is a direct Transgression of these Commands, *1 Pet. iii. 8. Be ye all of one Mind*; and *2 Cor. xiii. 11. Be of one Mind; Live in Peace*: St. Paul mentions the Divisions of the *Corinthians*; as a Proof of their being Carnal, *1 Cor. iii. 3. For whereas there is among you Envyng, Strife, and Divisions, are ye not Carnal?* And *1 Cor. xii.* he argues from our being one Body, one Society of which *Jesus Christ* is the Head, we should consider ourselves as Fellow-members, and that there should be *no Schism, or Divisions in the Body*.

And, I beseech you to observe, amongst what foul Crimes he ranks, Variances, Seditions, and Heresies, *Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. The Works of the Flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, Fornication, Uncleaness, Lasciviousness, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyng, Murders, Drunkenness, Revellings, and such like*; of all which he declares that *they who do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*.

And *Rom. xvi. 17.* he says, *I beseech you Bretherin, mark them which cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them; for they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own Belly; and by good Words and fair Speeches, deceive the Hearts of the Simple*.

From what has been said, I think, two things are evident.

First, If in Matters required of us not sinful, we do not obey our Superiors when lawfully commanded, by disobeying those human Laws, we likewise disobey the Law of God. So that the *Reasoner*, p. 23. need not have thought it strange it should be so dangerous

gerous to break the Laws of Man ; since by breaking *such* human Laws, he breaketh the Laws of God.

Secondly, It is evident that in a Religious View, to talk of a peaceable Separation, is to talk direct Nonsense, it is a Contradiction in Terms : For how can there be Peace in any Society where continual Disputes are carrying on, and Animosities are perpetually fomented by reason of the Separation ? The Peace of the Church of Christ, must consist in the mutual Harmony and Agreement which should be among all its Members ; and so long as all the Members of any Church walk by the same Rule, and mind the same Thing ; so long as they all observe the same Laws, and submit to the same Discipline ; so long is the Peace of that Society preserved : But if one saith I am of *Paul*, and another I am of *Apollos*, and a third I am of *Cephas*, and so on ; if there be Dissentions, Disagreements, and Divisions in it, surely, altho' there be no body kill'd, yet the Peace of that Church is broken. If I know the meaning of it, the English of the Word Dissention, is Disagreement : And what Notion can we have of the Peace of any Body of Men, where the Members who compose it do professedly disagree ? The Apostle *James* says, *c. iii. 16.* *Where Strife is, there is Confusion*, and how can it possibly be otherwise ? It is said too, that *the tender Mercies of the wicked are cruel*, in like manner, when I hear a Dissenter speak of the *Peaceableness* of his *Separation* in a Religious View, I cannot forbear thinking the Peace of the Dissenters is contrary to that of all other Men, it is deadly and destructive ; when a Church is divided in itself, it can no more stand, than a House or a Kingdom can ; the Reason of which proverbial Maxim is founded upon this, That in every Society which is formed and compacted by mutual Agreement, the least Dissention or Disagreement in that Society, doth certainly and naturally tend towards the Ruin and Dissolution of it.

Therefore

Therefore when you are told that your withdrawing yourselves from our Communion, and joining yourselves to other Societies, set up in Opposition to the Church of *England*, is a peaceable Separation; you are imposed upon, and are deceived by a fallacious Use of the Word Peaceable; for you must be sensible, that to separate from a Society, and to set up another against it, must be the most effectual way of destroying its Peace : The Dissenters Separation can in no Sense be called peaceable, except it be in a civil one; *i. e.* because there is no Blood spilt, and no Bones broken.

To conclude all, I beseech you to consider with yourself calmly what I have represented to you in this short Piece; read over the Reasons for Dissenting once more, and examine them one by one, with what is here said in Answer to them : At the End of every one, lay your Hand upon your Heart, and ask your own Conscience seriously, whether you do really think *that one* to be a sufficient Reason for your withdrawing yourself from our Communion? And if your Conscience shall answer you, that it is not, then be assured, that Ten or a Hundred bad and trifling Reasons cannot possibly make one good one : And if you have no good Reason for it, then consider how dreadful a Thing it is to fall under the Sentence which *St. Paul* pronounces against those who cause Divisions, *Rom. xvi. 17.* to be avoided, or excommunicated from the Society of all good Men; and against those who are guilty of Variance, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Murder, &c. *Gal. v. 19. 20, 21.* *That they which do such Things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.*

The *Reasoner* in another Piece of his (for I have had Patience to read *some* of it) directs his Congregation to distinguish between the Substantials and Circumstantials of Religion; and I am glad I can agree with him in one thing : Certainly every Man should make that Distinction who can, but the *Reasoner*

soner was not aware of the Consequence of it, for if his Congregation was to take him at his Word, and follow his Advice, he must shut up his Meeting, or talk to the Walls : Was Religion a little better understood, the Disputes concerning it would not be so many ; Men would not stumble at Trifles, and quarrel about indifferent Matters, but rather follow after the Things which make for Peace : A modest and good Man would not be so tenacious of his own private Opinion, but in Matters of small Moment, would rather give in to the general Sense of the Church in which he lives, especially if he understands the 14th Chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans* : And I pray God we may all be convinced of this plain Truth, which is too little attended to and considered, namely, *That the Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink, but RIGHTEOUSNESS and PEACE and JOY in the HOLY GHOST.*

POST.

P O S T S C R I P T.

THE *Twenty Third* Edition of the *Plain Reasons* did not come to my Hands, till I had finished what I thought proper to say to them, as they appeared in the *Twenty Second*. I have since found, by comparing those two Editions, that there are a few Alterations and Additions made in the last, and tho' they are not very considerable, I shall here give an Account of them.

Page 10. Instead of *above an hundred and fifty Days*, he says, *a great many Days*. This Alteration seems to discover a Consciousness that his former Charge of *above an hundred and fifty Days* was stretched a little too far.

Page 17. In the third Objection to us upon Account of the Lord's Supper, he complains, that Persons are *allowed* to come to that Holy Ordinance *not for the Profit of their Souls*, which the Reader will perceive is absolutely false; for in the Exhortation mentioned, p. 45. we always set before our Communicants *the great Danger of unworthy receiving*, and we always insist upon the Qualifications mentioned, p. 13. and if any Person comes without those Qualifications, it is at his own Peril, and *He* must answer for it, not *We*, who cannot determine with any certainty, and therefore ought not to make ourselves the Arbitrary Judges of another Man's Sincerity.

Page 18. Instead of, *which is all that they ask of their Communicants*, Edition *Twenty-third* says, which is all that *some* ask, &c. But this is as false as the other Assertion; for I have proved that we *All* ask much more of our Communicants: However, this is a tacit Confession, that his former general Charge was wrong,

Page 20. He adds, *Irenæus who lived in the Second Century, calls their Bishopricks Parishes; and so they are called many hundred Times in Eusebius's Church History.*

Who told him this I know not; certain it is, he has read neither of them: If he had read *Irenæus* he could not have said what he did before of him; and he who can affirm, that *Justin Martyr, Polycarp, Irenæus, and Cyprian*, wrote about *Albanasius*, cannot have read *Eusebius's*, or indeed any other History which relates the Affairs of the Church in those Times. But I do not think he had it from the same Person who supplied him with the other Informations about the Primitive Church, because Part of it at least happens to be true: I will agree with him, that *Eusebius* doth call them *Parishes* several Times, but tho' this is what may impose upon an unwary *English* Reader, it will do his Cause no Service, when it is properly considered. I readily grant that a Bishop's *Diocese*, was frequently called his *Parish*, for the first three or four hundred Years. But that Word did not then signify the Houses or Fields near a Church, but the Towns and Villages in the neighbourhood of a City; which Towns and Villages, together with the City itself, contained the Bounds of the Bishop's ordinary Jurisdiction, and were all together called his *Parish*, or as we now call it his *Diocese* *. And thus, if the *Reasoner* pleases, (for I would not dispute about Words) he may call the Counties of *Norfolk* and *Suffolk*, and Part of the County of *Cambridge*, with the City and County of *Norwich*, the *Parish* of the Bishop of *Norwich*.

That the Word really had this Sense at the Time I am speaking of, may be evident from hence: That the largest Dioceses of all, such as *Rome*, and *Antioch*, nay, and *Alexandria*, were called Parishes, and that by the very Writer he mentions; if he had ever cast his Eyes on *Eusebius's* History, he would have seen

* See *Bingham's Antiquities*, l. 9. c. 2.

in the very first Page of him, that he there proposes to give an Account of the Bishops in the most famous *Parishes* : And we cannot mistake his Meaning here, because we see in the Prosecution of this Work, he gives us the Succession of the Bishops in the Dioceses of *Rome*, and *Antioch*, and *Alexandria* *. I have already shewed from Mr. *Bingham*, that the Diocese of *Alexandria*, at the Time of *Alexander* and *Abanasius*, was of large Extent, (see p. 53.) there were a great many Churches in the City itself, in each of which there was a Presbyter, and yet all that large Diocese was called by *Alexander* the Bishop of it, his *Parish* †. And St. *Austin*, in his Letter to a Bishop of *Rome* tells him the Town of *Fussala* was forty Miles distant from Hippo ; but that the Town and the Country about it did belong to the Parish of the Church of Hippo ‡. The Truth is, the Words *Parish* and *Diocese* were anciently used promiscuously to signify the same Thing, The District over which a Bishop did exercise Jurisdiction ; as I could shew from many other Instances if it was necessary : But from what has been now said, nothing can be plainer,

* See *Euseb.* l. 1. c. 1. and l. 3. c. 21. and several other Places in that History ; the *Reasoner* says *Eusebius* calls *Bishopricks Parishes* many hundred Times, but I suppose the Person that informed him, might be led into that by his Ignorance of the *Latin*, in *Valesius's* Note upon the Passage referr'd to in the first Page of *Eusebius* : *Valesius* there observes, that sometimes the Word *Parochia* is taken in a larger Sense, for a whole Diocese, ut apud *Eusebium* sexcentis in Locis occurrit, which he *learnedly* translated, many hundred Times, not knowing what almost any School Boy could have told him, that according to the *Latin* Idiom, when it is said a Word occurs in six hundred Places it doth not mean that the Word is really to be found exactly so many Times, but an indetermined Number, that is as we say a Thousand Times, or a great many Times.

† See his Letter in *Socrates's* History, l. 1. c. 6.

‡ *Fussala* dicitur Hipponensi Territorio confine Castellum, antea ibi nunquam Episcopus fuit, sed simul cum contigua sub regione ad *Paraciam* Hipponensis Ecclesiæ pertinebat.—Sed ab Hippone memoratum Castellum millibus quadraginta sejungitur.

Augustine's Ep. 262. ad *Cælestinum*. Edit. *Lugd.*

than

than that the calling of a *Diocese* by the Name of a *Parish*, doth by no means confine it to a single Congregation, as the *Reasoner* would falsely insinuate.

He adds further, " And *Justin Martyr*, who liv'd " in the same Century" *i. e.* with *Irenæus*, but not with *Eusebius*, (I hope) saith, " on the Lord's Day " all the Church assembled in one Place, where the " Bishop preaches, for where the Pastor is, there " the Flock must be."

It must be granted, that I had need be endued with a moderate Share of Patience to go through with what I have undertaken, as the Reader will perceive from this Quotation : It is one which the *Reasoner* seems to be extremely pleased with, for he quotes it no less than three several Times, in this little Pamphlet, *p.* 6. 20. and 37 *.

But if upon Examination it appears, 1. That this Writer has joined together two Pieces of Sentences from two different Authors, and put them off, so joined together as the Words of one of them : and 2. That he misrepresents the Sense and the Words of both of them : Then I think it will be pretty clear, that this Quotation can do no Service to the Cause which it is brought to support, and that the *Reasoner* must lie under a strong Imputation, either of a want of Knowledge, or a want of Honesty for thus producing it.

1. That this Writer has joined together two Pieces of Sentences from two different Authors, and put them off, so joined together, as the Words of one of them, will be proved by a Blunder of his own.

Indeed I should not have known what to have made of the Passage as it stands in the *Plain Reasons*, if he had not betrayed himself, *p.* 37. where he

* But lest the Reader should think it the same, the last Time he quotes it, he puts *P. Mar.* instead of *J. Mar.* That this is no Mistake of the Printers, but is done with Design, appears from hence, that it stands so in all the Editions I have seen, *viz.* the 19th, the 22d, and 23d.

quotes *P. Mar. Apol.* for the first Part of the Sentence, and *Epist. ad Philadelph.* for the latter Part of it; and if it had been so, it would have been a strange and unjustifiable way of representing the Words of an Author, to take two different Sentences from two different Books of his, and to give them his Reader as one and the same Sentence: But the Case is far worse, for it happens (unluckily for our *Reasoner*) that *Justin* wrote no Epistle to the *Philadelphians*, it was another Man, one *Ignatius* the Bishop of *Antioch*, who hath left us an Epistle which he wrote to them; and in that, there are some Words a little like these which the *Reasoner* gives us; that is, they look a little like them in Shape, but as I will shew presently are very different in Meaning. Now to take a Scrap of a Sentence from *Ignatius*, and join it to a Piece of a Sentence of *Justin's*, and to put the whole off for his, is so great a Crime in Writing, that I want a Name for it.

But what will make the Thing still blacker (if possible) is that which I am now to shew, *viz.*

2. That he has misrepresented the Sense of both these Authors, that this may be the clearer I will first consider the Words of *Justin Martyr*, and then those of *Ignatius*.

Justin says, *On the Day called Sunday, all throughout Cities and Countries assemble together, and the Writings of the Apostles and Prophets are read; after that, when the Reader has done, he who presides [in the Assembly] in a Sermon, instructs and exhorts the People, &c. **

The Question here is whether he truly represents the Sense of this Passage or I, and the first Difference is as to those Words, whether they signify their meeting in one Place, or only in General their meeting

* Τῇ δ' ἡλίας λεγομένη ἡμέρᾳ πάντων κτ' πόλεις ἢ ἄγραις μενέσθων ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συναλίσσεισιν γίνεσθαι, καὶ τὰ ἀπὸ μνημονεύματα τῶν δόξασαντων—ἀναγινώσκει. Εἰτα, παυσσαμένης τῆς ἀναγινώσκοντος, ὁ πρῶτος διὰ λόγου τῶν νεθεσίων καὶ περὶ κλήσιν τῶν καλῶν τούτων μιμήσεως ποιεῖται. *Just. Mart. Apol. l. Edit. Thirl. p. 97.*

together, tho' in different Places, and in different Companies : Just as we might say, the Members of the Church of *England* whether they reside in Cities or Villages, meet together every Sunday for the Worship of God.

Here I must observe, that this Phrase doth not of itself signify *in one Place*, and should not be so rendered ; except the Sense of the Author doth necessarily confine its meaning : In many Places which I could produce it cannot have that Sense, and there are several such Instances in Scripture, of which any Man may judge. *Acts* ii. 24. *All that believed were together.* Upon which *Lightfoot* observes, this Phrase is used in a different Sense, by the LXX Interpreters, and sometimes betokeneth Mens knitting together, though in several Companies : And in this Sense is the Word to be understood in this Story : For says he, *it is past all Imagination or conceiving, that all those thousands of Believers that were now in Jerusalem, should keep all of one Company and Knot : For what House would hold them ? But they kept in several Companies, according as their Languages, Nations, or other References did knit them together. And this joining together, because it was apart from those that believed not ; and because it was in the same Profession and Practice of the Duties of Religion, therefore it is said to be ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ tho' it were in several Companies and Congregations* *.

Psalms xlix. 1, 2. *Give ear, all ye Inhabitants of the World ; both low and high, rich and poor together.*

Even the *Reasoner* cannot suppose all the Inhabitants of the World *in one Place*.

It is translated the same, *Acts* iii. 1. *Peter and John went up together into the Temple ;* so again, *Acts* iv. 26. *The Kings of the Earth stood up, and the Rulers were gathered together, But Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the People of Israel [see v. 27] were not gathered together in one Place.*

* See *Lightfoot* upon the Place.

It appears then that these Words do not always signify *in one Place* : In these Places it is plain they cannot : And it is as plain they cannot in that Passage of *Justin's*, which I am considering : For how can it be conceived that all Christians, throughout Cities and Countries, should assemble *in one Place* * ? And, by the Way, I must here observe, that they do not necessarily signify *in one Place*, even in 1 *Cor.* xi. 20.

The next Difference is as to the Word *ἐπισκοπῆς* whether it must necessarily be translated Bishop.

Justin, in that Apology, is giving the Roman Emperor and Senate, and all the *Heathens*, a general Account of the Christian Faith and Practice ; and among other Things, he gives a general Account of their Worship : And as he is speaking to *Heathens*, who were not acquainted with the different Orders of Bishops and Priests, he here uses neither of those Words, but a general one which may be applied to either of them ; and says, *the Sermon was spoken by him who presided in the Assembly* †.

I allow that among the Ancient Writers, by this Word they frequently and commonly do mean the Bishop : But yet I presume it is not necessary that they *always* should : For tho' in the Primitive Church the Bishop always preached when he was present, and for some time it was unusual for a Priest to preach before a Bishop ; yet in the Absence of the Bishop, a Priest presided in the Congregation, and then *He* preached, agreeably to *Justin's* Account. But if *Justin* had said strictly, that in every Assembly of Christi-

* See the Original Draught of the Primitive Church, &c. p. 44. 53. And I must in Compassion to the *Reasoner* acquaint him, that *The Enquiry into the Constitution, &c. of the Primitive Church*, is a Book not to be depended upon, it will lead him into many a Scrape ; and it may be of Use to him to take this Hint, that if at any Time he should be tempted to take any Thing from thence, he should not send it to the Press, before he has seriously considered what the very Learned Author of the *Original Draught* &c. has said in Answer to it.

† See the Author just now referred to.

ans a *Bishop* always preached; or if he had said, that a *Priest* always preached; his Account would not have been exactly true: And probably this might be the Reason why he used that Word, which might be applied either to a Bishop or a Priest.

But, to carry this a little further, it may be considered, that in the Language of Antiquity, a Bishop may be said to Preach by his Presbyters. Of this let *Ignatius* be judge, who says, (*Ep. ad Smyr. Sect. 8.*) *Let no one do any Thing in the Church without the Bishop; but immediately adds, Let that Eucharist be esteemed to be valid, which is performed by the Bishop, or by one whom he shall authorise.* What was done then by a Person appointed by the Bishop, was judged by *Ignatius* to be done by himself, *i. e.* by his Authority. And in this Sense the Bishop may be said to preach in every Parish in his Diocese, that is, by his Priests and Deacons, commissioned by him for that Purpose.

Let all this be considered, and then let any Man judge whether *Justin's* Words are as the *Reasoner* represents them, and whether they speak against *Episcopacy*.

The Quotation from *Ignatius* will take less Time; for in his Epistle to the *Philadelphians*, after recommending to them, (in the Preface) Union with their Bishop, and the Priests and Deacons which were with him; in the Body of the Epistle he exhorts them thus: *As Children of the Light and the Truth, avoid Separation, and Evil Doctrines: But where the Shepherd is, there, like Sheep, do you follow* *.

I will only assure him that this is a just Translation, and then leave the Reader to compare it with the *Reasoner's*: And upon the whole, I humbly conceive that no Argument can be drawn from hence against the Order of *Bishops*; tho' this very Sentence will

* *Τίτλια ἐν φωτὸς, καὶ ἀληθείας, φεύγετε τὸν μερισμὸν, καὶ τὰς κακοδιδασκαλίας: ὅτι οὗτοι οἱ ποιμῆνες εἰσιν, ἐν ᾧ ὡς πρόβατα ἀκολουθεῖτε.* Ignat. ad Philadelph. p. 26.

furnish us with one against *Separation* : And I could produce several other Passages from the same Epistle, to support the Distinction between *Bishops* and *Priests* : But of this enough hath been said before. The *Reasoner* is the less excusable for quoting *Ignatius* falsely, because he might have consulted Archbishop *Wake's English Translation*, who renders the Passage thus : *Wherefore, as becomes the Children both of the Light and of Truth, flee Divisions and false Doctrines : But where your Shepherd is, there do ye, as Sheep, follow after.* Any one may see that this Translation is the same in Sense with mine ; only I have endeavour'd to keep rather more closely to the Letter of the Original. I am inclined to think, if the *Reasoner* had read this Epistle, he would not have quoted it, for by doing so, he puts his Reader upon examining into it, if he be capable ; and as the genuine Epistle is but a short one, he may be tempted to read it through ; by doing which, he will find the Distinction between *Bishops*, *Priests*, and *Deacons*, so often repeated, that I would advise our *Reasoner*, (if he has his Cause at Heart) never to refer to this Epistle again.

F I N I S.

R E M A R K S

O N A

P A M P H L E T

I N T I T L E D

*A Vindication of the Principles
and Practice of Protestant
Dissenters, &c.* Bourn, Samuel,
1689-1754

*By the Author of the Short Answer to the Plain
Reasons for Dissenting, &c.*

[Rev. Richard Canning]



L O N D O N :

Printed for C. DAVIS, against Gray's-Inn, Holbourn;
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TON, at Ipswich.

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P R E F A C E.

THE following Papers, when taken by themselves, amount to no more than what they are stiled in the Title, REMARKS on the Book that occasion'd them: But, if what is here said, be consider'd, with what I have advanced in The Short Answer to the Plain Reasons, &c. it may serve as a sufficient Answer to all the material Points that are urged against the Church of England in that Book. As the Short Answer is already in many Hands, it was thought more proper to refer to that, than to repeat in this Pamphlet what was there said; and for the Benefit of those who have it not, a second Edition of it is now published, and may be had where this is sold.

When first I heard of this Vindication, I was the more desirous of seeing it, because I did expect that the Author would attempt to vindicate the Practice of the Dissenters in all those Points that the Reverend Mr. White had particularly objected to them: But in this I was wholly disappointed. And truly, the Book is so far from being, what the Title pretends, a Vindication of the Principles and Practice of Protestant Dissenters, that the Author would have kept much nearer to the Rules of Truth and Modesty, if he had continued the Title that was first intended, which, as appears from the first Page, and the running Title, was, The Principles of Protestant Dissenters explain'd, or, The Pro-

The P R E F A C E.

Protestant Dissenters Catechism. *I was, I confess, a little chagrin'd at my Disappointment, and wish'd for my Money again; nor can I to this Moment persuade myself, that my Expectation was in the least unreasonable: For, if the Dissenting Churches are liable to the same, or the like Objections that the Church of England is; and, if the same Reasons that the Dissenters have hitherto alledg'd to justify their Separation from Us, do hold equally strong against those Societies with which they associate, (as Mr. White's Letters do fully shew;) then, He who would vindicate the present Practice of the Dissenters, must seek for some other Reasons, besides those they have already given, or his Vindication will prove, like this, miserably lame, insufficient, and ineffectual. This is so evident and plain a Point, that every sensible Man must see the Force of it. And therefore, if this Writer should think proper to vindicate his Vindication, I must entreat him to explain himself fully on that Head. And if his Defence should be written without Acrimony and Virulence, without railing Invectives, injurious Reflections, false or fallacious Insinuations, and all those other Artifices which are not wanted in Support of Reason and Truth, but are often used by crafty Men, to blind, mislead, or prejudice the Minds of the Vulgar, then, I doubt not, but the Writers of our Church will either acquiesce, or give his Defence a suitable Answer, with as much Candour, Temper, and Civility, as any fair and generous Adversary can desire.*



REMARKS

On a Late

VINDICATION, &c.



THE *Short Answer to the plain Reasons for dissenting, &c.* was first published in the Year 1740 : And I cannot learn that there hath been any new Edition of the *Plain Reasons*, since that mention'd in the Postscript. But that the Zeal for the Separation may not abate for want of such *useful* and *instructive* Books, the Publick have lately been favoured with a *Vindication of the Principles and Practice of Protestant Dissenters, &c.* This Book is professedly published with the *like* Intent, that the *plain Reasons* were, and, probably, may be designed to *succeed* in the Room of *them*. The Stile of this Author is not so low and vulgar as the *Reasoner's* ; but his Language is by no means less virulent and abusive. The Title-Page does not say *who* or *what* the Author is, but from the Bookseller's Advertisement at the End of the Preface, we may collect that He is a *Teacher* in some *separate* Congregation ; this is the most that I know of him, with which I am well enough content ; because, as I am entirely a Stranger to his Person, his Character, and his Writings, I *can* make no *personal* Reflections, which in all Controversies should carefully be avoided. The main Objections

of this Gentleman to the Church of England, are *no* better than those that the *Plain-Reasoner* had mention'd; and therefore, I should have taken no Notice of his Book, were it not for the general Invitation that He hath given in *the Preface* to it. From such a Writer as the *Reasoner*, Silence for the future was the most that one could fairly hope for; but, it seems, from *this Gentleman*, more may be expected. He has there given his Word, that "if any Facts are wrong
 " stated, any false Principles asserted, any weak or
 " inconclusive Reasonings built upon right Principles,
 " or, if any Charges are unfairly brought against the
 " established Church and Worship, the Author stands
 " open to Conviction, and thereupon will readily re-
 " tract them: For He is far from being disposed to
 " widen the Breach, or cherish Animosities, between
 " *what is called the national Church and the Dissenters*"

A Gentleman of this candid and ingenuous Disposition, and withal so peaceably inclined, cannot be offended with any Man for making *a few Remarks* upon his Performance: And tho' I am not so sanguine as to hope that I may be able to convince *him* of the Unreasonableness of his Separation; it is possible I may have better Success with *some of his Readers*: And I think, in some Particulars, *He* must be constrained to confess, that I have some Right to claim the Performance of the before-mention'd Promise: And if I can point out any *wrong Facts, false Principles, weak or inconclusive Reasonings, or unfair Charges* against *what is called the National Church*, then I have some Reason to expect he will retract them.

Encourag'd, therefore, by the Passage before quoted, I the more cheerfully set about this disagreeable Business; and as my first Concern is, chiefly, with the Author himself, I will beg Leave to apply myself directly to *him*, assuring him that I do this for no other Reason, than because I think it will take up less Room, if I speak to him in the *second Person*.

Before

Before I come to Particulars, permit me, Sir, to make a general Observation or two upon some Things that I think blameable, and which I judge to be Faults that run through the whole of your Book.

At your first setting out you declare that your Book is intended for the Instruction of *Children and Youth*, and in *such* a Performance it becomes every Man to be more especially cautious, not to advance any thing that is not *strictly true*, and not to make use of any indirect Method to *deceive* or *mislead* his Pupils; because they cannot discern between Good and Evil; they cannot be supposed capable of detecting a Falshood; they swallow and believe whatever their Instructors teach them; and what is learned in their *younger* Years, will be apt to make a *deep* and *lasting* Impression on them. An Inspired Writer has directed us, *Prov. xx. 6.* to *Train up* (the Margin reads, *Catechize*) *a Child in the Way he should go, and, for this Reason, because when he is old he will not depart from it.* This Consideration should the rather determine you to perform your Promise, of retracting whatever upon a Review shall be found to deserve it: For, if by producing any *false Facts, ill grounded Principles, fallacious Reasonings, injurious Reflections, &c.* you should persuade your Pupils to walk *in the Way wherein they should not go*, their Misfortune will be the greater, and the more you will have to answer for.

I observe one very disingenuous Fallacy, that runs throughout your Pamphlet. You speak of *dissenting* and *being Dissenters* as being equivalent Terms; and as if they both meant *separating* or *being Separatists*. From hence your Pupil is taught to believe, that if he should dislike the Usage of the Church of England in any particular, and *dissent*, or *disagree* to her Practice in *that* respect, he ought immediately to *be a Dissenter*, or turn *Separatist*, and forsake our Communion; a very fallacious and dangerous Conclusion. For, to instance in one of your *most important* Points, the use of the *Sign of the Cross* after Baptism: If any

Person should dissent from the Church of *England* as to this Usage, *i. e.* dislike, disapprove of it, and think it would be better laid aside; yet, this would by no means justify him in *forsaking our Communion*, and turning *Separatist*, because the use of it is upon no Account sinful in itself, and therefore may lawfully and conscientiously be complied with.

In the next Place, I think you deal unfairly with *the Children* in speaking of the Things that you object to the *Church of England*. For tho' at your first mention of them you sometimes set out *moderately*, you afterwards speak of them in quite a different Strain. In first objecting to some Things you say indeed, they are *far*, *very far* from being agreeable to the Word of God; some are *far* from being so; some are only *not agreeable*; some you seem to be in Doubt about yourself, and say, they are *not very agreeable*; and some again your Conscience will not permit you to say so much as that, and all your Objection is, they *do not appear* to be agreeable: But when you are gotten a few Pages forward, are in a declaiming Fit, and out of Sight of the Objections as they were at first started, tho' you have not proved even what you attempted concerning them, you do not either fail, or scruple to mention them as Things altogether *sinful*; and your Pupil may be made to think, as I fear you intended he *should*, that *these*, and *each one* of these, I'll warrant you, is a sufficient Reason to justify his Separation. A careful Reader will observe this Behaviour in other Particulars; as to our Ceremonies it is very flagrant; for however you may mince the Matter concerning them in the former Part of your Book, from p. 174, &c. *nothing is indifferent that relates to the Worship of God*, and all our Ceremonies are condemned in the Lump, as absolutely *sinful*.

Your unfair Dealing under this Head will lead me to another, and that is your *gross Misapplication of Scripture*; a Fault that is less excusable than all the rest. To say nothing of the two other Texts before-

men-

mention'd under this Head, p. 176, 177, in one of which you do us the honour to apply 2 *Thess.* xi. 3, 4. to us; you produce two plain Texts of Scripture to prove, that *that* Worship (i. e. *That* particular Mode, that Form and Manner of Christian Worship, for of this alone you are here speaking) which is not *prescribed* by God, may be deem'd as *forbidden* by him. These are *Deut.* xii. 32. *What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.* So you would make the *Child* believe that *Moses* is speaking here of the Modes and Forms of Christian Worship, would you? Or, because the *Jews* were here forbid to add any of the Idolatrous Rites of their neighbouring Nations to those which *Moses* had *minutely* prescribed, therefore the Governors of the *Christian Church* may not ascertain the Time, Place, Habits, Gestures, and other such Circumstances of the *Christian* Worship as they judge to be proper for it and *agreeable* to the Scope of *God's Word*, where *none* of these Circumstances are *at all* determined. You cannot think this a good Consequence.

If this is not to the purpose let us try the other, *Matt.* xv. 9. *But in vain do they worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.* Our Blessed Saviour had great Reason to say this of the Jewish Scribes and Pharisees, who by their traditionary Doctrines had in effect set aside the Obligation of the fifth Commandment: As he complains, *v.* 4, 5, 6. And therefore he declar'd they would in vain worship him, tho' they were never so scrupulous and nice about the Punctilio's of their Religion, and their legal or traditionary Purifications, mention'd, *v.* 2. if at the same time they prefer'd their *own Doctrines* to those which God had himself commanded. But what Relation has this to the *Modes* of *Christian* *Worship*? And how does this prove that *that* Worship, [and every Circumstance of our Worship, for there the Shoe pinches] which is not *prescrib'd* by God, should be deemed as *forbidden* by him? You should not impose upon

upon the *Child*, but shew him how the Scriptures you quote do plainly prove the thing you produce them for.

It was artfully done to tell your Readers in the Preface, that “ if the Faults in the Constitution and Offices of the national Church are represented— with more sharpness of Expression than some may think fitting, this—proceeds not from any Acrimony in the Writer, any Resentment, or Inclination to irritate the Minds of others, but purely to impress the Subject, with a Force adequate to its Importance.” —This Assurance may make your *young Pupils* imagine, that when you rave most and speak with most *Acrimony*, the *Importance of the Subject*, and the *Heinousness* of the Offences you declaim against, is what alone excites all that Passion in you. Whereas had you, for Instance, seriously and professedly endeavour’d to dissuade him from the *Crying Sin* of signing a Child with the *Sign of the Cross* after *Baptism*; or the *heinous Crime of Kneeling at the Lord’s Supper*, he must have an uncommon Command over the Muscles of his Face, if he were able to keep his Countenance.

Your Book is the more dangerous, and ought not to be put into the Hands of *Children*, because under the Pretence of setting forth the *Principles of Dissenters*, you inculcate Principles that are *not theirs*; and advance *your own* Notions instead of them. I will appeal to the *Dissenters themselves*, whether they do not in general believe the Doctrine of the *Trinity* exactly in the Manner that the Church of *England* declares herself about it, in her *Creeds, Articles, and Liturgy*; And yet this furnishes you with *one Reason* for their *Separation*. I only just mention this here, *because* I must speak of it again, and I expect your Brethren will do themselves justice and call you to Account for it.

If you misrepresent your own Fellow-Labourers in the Cause of *Separation*, we may well expect that your *Adversaries* will have no Quarter. We desire none, so long as you keep within the Bounds of Justice and Truth;

Truth; but I think, I have good Reason to complain of the Manner in which you speak of, and represent *the Church, and the Clergy of England*, throughout your Pamphlet.

The *Child* must be an *Idiot*, if he does not consider, that you are not writing a *Vindication of the Protestant Cause*, in Opposition to the Church of *Rome*; but a *Vindication of the Protestant Separatists in this Kingdom*, in Opposition to the Church of *England* from which they separate. The *Church* therefore, and the *Clergy* that you inveigh against, are the *Church of England* and the *English Clergy*, however indirectly and covertly you may contrive to do it. The *Clergy* of the Church of *England* have always had *some Reputation* among all *foreign Protestants*, and are generally mentioned with *some Respect* by them. But you are pleased to represent us, p. 3, as *an ignorant, idle, proud, worldly, unholy Clergy*,—*that have been the Church's greatest Plague*. It is true, you say *the most notorious Instance of this Lordship of the Clergy, &c. is Popery, or the Church of Rome*; but you leave your Reader to look where he pleases for the *less notorious Instances*; and do frequently in other Places intimate to him, that there is but little Difference between that Church and ours; p. 4. for the sake of introducing your *innumerable Multitude of devouring Locusts*, you wander away to the *Monasteries of the Papal Religion*, which were altogether foreign to the Matter in hand, and could answer no other Purpose than to assist your Readers in forming a *very false and injurious Comparison*; and even with Regard to the Inhabitants of those Monasteries, tho' I am not concern'd to say one Word in their Defence, I cannot think you judge very charitably, when you brand the whole *four Millions, &c.* with the heavy Charge of being *idle and vicious Creatures*. P. 27, you represent us as *worldly Hypocrites and lazy Drones, who will subscribe any thing for Preferment and Gain—and accept the Glory of this World on shameful Conditions—many of whom do not believe the Articles they subscribe*—lying

—*lying to God and the World*—who p. 52. *play the Fool or act the Tyrant by either ridiculous or unrighteous Canons, Articles, and Decrees.* P. 87, as *an ignorant, cold, and lazy Clergy—that cannot preach without Homilies* [tho' you know we do not now publickly use them] *nor pray without Forms*—and p. 88. as *an illiterate, lazy, lifeless Clergy.*—Were I to produce all the Passages of this Sort, I must transcribe a *great Part* of your Book; let these suffice for a *Specimen.* But notwithstanding this vile Representation of us, I hope the *English Clergy* ought not to be placed in this *despicable and odious View*; *no foreign Protestant* would represent us thus; and I verily believe in the general Opinion even of our *English Separatists*, we do not deserve it: Neither is this Treatment consistent with your own Rule, p. 38. *viz. That in bearing Testimony against our Church-Government, Men should carefully avoid either Wrath or Rudeness.* I cannot, Sir, persuade myself to consider these, and such like Passages, as Instances either of your *Temper* or your *Civility*; and if upon second Thoughts you should judge them to be at all *angry or rude*, I claim the Benefit of your Promise, and expect that you would soften them.

In several Places you represent the Separatists as a *distressed and suffering People, giving up many worldly Advantages*; and give it as a Reason why there are not *more Separatists, because the Preferments and Profits of this World lie on the other Side, &c.* But I am persuaded that the Truth is in this Point against you, and that the Separation could never have been maintained, *if by this Craft Men had not their Gain.* The great Sway and Influence that the *Leaders and Managers* of every separate Congregation have, and I might say, the *Tyranny* that they exercise over the *inferior Members* of it, must be a considerable Bait to those who have any Pride and Ambition in their Temper: And the *Interest and Profit* that thereby accrues to *them*, cannot but influence the Practice of the bustling and intriguing Men amongst you. From
hence

hence it is no rare thing to see some Persons assuming an Air of Importance, and sometimes others applying to them as People of *some* Consequence, who, were it not for the Power of the *Meeting*, would hardly be distinguished from the meanest of the Crowd. Again, were we to examine among the Places of Trust and *Profit*; look into the Offices about the *Court*, and in every Branch of the *Revenue*, the *Customs*, the *Excise*, the *Post-Office*, the *Land-Tax*, the *House-Tax*, &c. we should find that the *Separatists* have, in Fact, to speak most moderately, to be sure their *full Share* in Proportion to their *Numbers*, and *much more* than their Share in Proportion to their *Weight*. And even as to the more private Advantages which arise from Mens Employments, let a Man's Profession, Trade, or Art be what it will, the surest way to have *some certain* Business, is to turn *Separatist*; for then he will not fail to have all the Professors, the Aiders and Abettors of the *Schism* for *his* Customers. This Policy, which you know is universally practised by *your* People, is of double Advantage to you, it sometimes gains a Proselyte, and when he is gained it keeps him tight to you. This is the *Sanction* that enforces what you call *your Discipline*; for tho' Excommunication among you is not attended with any *legal* Inconvenience, a *rebellious* and *schismatical Delinquent* would infallibly be punished with the Loss of his Business; and *this* in many Cases would be a severe Punishment. Were *We* of the establish'd Church to proceed upon *the same narrow Principles*, and confine our Dealings to those of our own Communion *only*, it would be a greater Hardship than any that has been inflicted on the *Separatists*, greater by far than any of those concerning which you declaim so tragically *.

I shall take but little Notice of your *History*, tho' there are few Articles in it but what deserve Censure: Because I think it altogether foreign to the present

* Upon this Subject see more in the Rev. Mr. *White's* first Letter to a Dissenting Gentleman, p. 7, &c.

Dispute ; and I leave it to your own Conscience to consider how far this History is consistent with your Declaration, that you are “ far from being disposed “ to widen the Breach or cherish Animosities :” For, What other purpose could *this* be calculated to serve ?

But I must observe that, *p. 2.* you *misquote* the nineteenth Article of the Church of *England*, exactly as the *Plain Reasoner* had done before. See *short Answer*, *p. 10.*

You ask, *p. 7.* Whether in the time of *Edward VI.* there were any Dissenters, &c ? And answer, “ Yes : “ Bishop *Hooper* ; who refusing to be consecrated in “ the Popish Habits was imprisoned, and his Life endangered. *Rogers* likewise, *Philpot*, *Tyms*, Bishop “ *Latimer*, Bishop *Farrar*, Dr. *Taylor*, *Coverdale*, “ *Martyr*, *Bucer*, most of whom were Sufferers in the “ next Reign, and many others, were *all of dissenting “ Principles*, and declar’d against the Popish Habits “ and Ceremonies.” And were all these *Dissenters*, i. e. *Separatists* ? No, that you do not say ; But they were of *dissenting Principles*. So is the *Grand Seignior*, and the *Emperor of China* ; for they *dissent* from the Church of *Rome*, and the Church of *England* too ; and that is more than was true of those good Men here mentioned. It is true, *Bishop Hooper* did refuse to be consecrated in the Habits *then used* ; but in *this* he was condemned by all those who meant well to the Reformation, particularly by *Bucer* and *Peter Martyr*, two of *your Dissenters*, the former of whom thought *they* *finned* who refused to obey the Laws in that particular : And the latter expressed himself with great Warmth against *Hooper’s Stiffness*. *Bishop Hooper* heartily repented of what he had done before he suffered *Martyrdom* ; and after all, his chief Objection was to the *Colour* rather than the *Habit* itself ; for at that time, the Part of the Episcopal Habit to which the Lawn is fix’d, and which is now *Black*, was *Red* ; and he thought that *too gaudy a Colour* for such a Vestment. It is said, that upon *his* objecting to it, the Colour was
chang’d

chang'd to *Black*; an Alteration much for the better. The other Persons mention'd, were all of them deeply concerned in the Reformation, and it is not reasonable to believe that any of them would separate from the Church of *England*, if they were now living; it is rather certain they *would not*. And how doth it appear that they were of *dissenting Principles*? Why, they declar'd against the *Popish Habits and Ceremonies*. Very true; and so do the *Clergy of our Church* at this Day: And therefore, as *They* and *We* are of the same Opinion as to these Matters, we pray that, by your good Leave, we may be admitted into the same venerable Company.

P. 8. You go farther, and brand all the reform'd *Clergy of England* with the Name of *Dissenters*. You say, "*in Queen Mary's Reign, all good Protestants were Dissenters.*" It is at the best but a *mean Artifice* to play with Words thus, and altogether unjustifiable, when you are talking to a *Child* upon the Subject of *Religion*. If you can prove that *they* separated from the Church of *Rome*, for the same Reasons that *you* now separate from the Church of *England*, and *no other*, then you have a Right to challenge them for Members of *your Party*. But if they separated from, and would not comply with the Church of *Rome*, because *unlawful and sinful Terms* were required of them; then, their Case and yours are by no Means parallel, and therefore it is unfair in you to pretend that they are.

You set hard upon the Learned Dr. Cox, afterwards Bishop of *Ely*, and it is the Fashion amongst *you Separatists* to do so. Dr. Cox had the *Honour* likewise to be abused by the *Popish Writers*. *These Men* had some Provocation; for as he was Tutor to *Edward VI.* they rightly concluded, that the Sentiments which that excellent and religious Prince had imbib'd, were instilled into him by Dr. Cox. Sanders said, expressly, that *the Protector put Cox about the King, that he might corrupt his Mind with Heretical Doctrines*. And what

Sanders call'd *Heretical*, you, I suppose, would call *Papist*; this is often the Case of the *English Clergy*. But Bishop *Burnet*, who is not remarkable for being sparing of his Censures, says of Dr. *Cox*, that ' *All the Writers* " of that Age make honourable mention of him. He " was first set about this King (*Edw. VI.*) by his Father, " and continued with him in all the Turns of Affairs ; " and did so faithfully discharge that high Trust, that it " appears he must have been a *very extraordinary Man*. " This was so well known to the whole Nation, that " in the Beginning of Queen *Mary's* Reign he met " with more than ordinary Favour. This, considering " the *Hatred which the Popish Party* bore him, is a " clear Evidence of his *great Worth*, and that they " were afraid to be severe to a Man *so universally* " *esteem'd*" *.

I think myself also but little concern'd with your Objections to *Ministerial Conformity*. For I do not give you or myself this Trouble upon *your* Account, but for the Sake of the unhappy *Pupil* that you are instructing. So that it might be sufficient to observe upon this Head, that if all that you advance about it were unexceptionable, this only regards those that are *disposed for the Ministry*; For it will by no Means follow, that any *Layman* ought to separate from our Communion, because *you* or any *other Man* cannot *ministerially* conform: But there are a few Passages that I beg leave to object to.

You say p. 19, Conforming Ministers must " re- " nounce their own Understanding, or Liberty of " judging according to the Evidence appearing to " them on strict and impartial Enquiry, by subscribing " the 39 Articles as a *Rule of Faith*." But you very well know that we do not subscribe the 39 Articles as a *Rule*, but as a *Declaration* of our Faith; which are two very different Things. We admit of no other *Rule of Faith* but the *holy Scripture*; And after using

* See Appendix to Burnet's Hist. of the Reformation, p. 385.
394.

our own Understanding, and judging according to the Evidence on a strict and impartial Enquiry, and finding *these Articles* to be in our Consciences agreeable to the Word of God, the true and *only Rule* of a Christian's Faith, we declare this to be *our Faith*. And how is this renouncing our Understanding and Liberty of judging? You do the same Thing among yourselves, or what is equivalent to it, at the Presbyterian Ordinations at least. For you confess, p. 22, "The Candidate is desired to give an Account of his Faith." It is fit he *should*, and you do right to require it of him: But it is unfair in you not to allow *us* to use the like Caution.

The *First Objection* to Ministerial Conformity is the *Hardship of being re-ordained*; and I so far agree with you, that if you do not think it right to comply with it, you have your Liberty, and you do well to refuse it. But p. 22, to say nothing of the gross Indecency and Offensiveness of your Expression of *State-Bishops*, which you seem to oppose to *Scripture-Bishops*, you misrepresent our Manner of ordaining *Priests*, which is done not only with the Imposition of the *Bishop's Hands*, but of *all the Priests present*, as the Rubrick of the Office may inform you*. And thus *Timothy* was ordained by the Imposition of *St. Paul's Hands*, with the laying on the *Hands of the Presbytery*; tho' you are pleased to represent his Ordination as performed *solely by the latter* †.

Your Reasoning in your next Answer is admirable. The Point you are driving at is, that the *Presbyterian* is preferable to the *Episcopal* Ordination; and here you say, appropriating the Right of Ordination to *twenty-four State-Bishops* (that is the Number you reduce them to) would open a Door to gross Corruption in the Church, seeing it is far from an impossible Supposition, that *Bishops may be Enemies to real Holiness*—and so may commit the Administration of Gospel-Ordinances to

* By Canon 31, there must be four Presbyters present.

† Compare 2 Tim. i. 6. with 1 Tim. iv. 14.

Persons altogether unqualified.—And what if we should suppose *they may*? Will it follow from hence that the *Presbyterian* Ordination is preferable to the *Episcopal*? Does not this prove as much against *your* Ordination, if you have any (for it does not certainly appear to me what Denomination you are of) as it does against *ours*? For may not *Presbyters* possibly *be* and *do* all this as well as *Bishops*? Be so good then as to set this down under the Head of inconclusive Reasoning, which comes very near to *no reasoning* at all.

As to the *Second general Hardship*, the Subscription to the 39 Articles, I shall refer your Reader to *Mr. White's Appendix to his third Letter*. But I observe that you insinuate, p. 25, that this Subscription is *imposed* upon them, and that some *are cast out of the Church for not subscribing*.

But neither of these Facts is true; no Man is required to subscribe *against his Will*; nor did I ever hear of any Man that was punished for his Sentiments in these Matters, *so long as he kept them to himself*. Much less is any Man *cast out of the Church* for not subscribing, such a one will only *not be admitted to the Ministry*.

You flatly assert, p. 28, that this *Subscription is inconsistent with the Sixth Article*. But you do not offer a single Syllable in Support of that strange Assertion; it was prudently done not to attempt it; but this way of reasoning is *not very conclusive*, tho' it is what you have practised before. For p. 23, your Answer says, that "Ordination by *Bishops*, does not seem so conformable to the 23d Article of the Church of *England*, as Ordination on the Dissenters Principles." It is true the Expression is a little qualified here, but you leave it entirely to your Pupil to find out this *seeming Want of Conformity*; and when he has found it, I will be obliged to him for the Discovery. In the mean time, I must call it, either *a Fact wrong stated*, or *a false Principle asserted*, which you please. I might easily point out a great Number of Instances of the *same Kind*, where you dictate to your Pupil a decisive

Answer

Answer of *Yes*, or *No*, to a Question that contains a controverted Point, without condescending to assign the least Reason for determining it on one Side, rather than the other. So that He may easily mistake and say *Yes*, when he *should*, and if he were left to his own impartial Judgment, probably *would* say, *No*. This is indeed a Method, and a pretty sure one, of *training up Children and Youth in the Knowledge of your Principles*, and of *leading them into your Practice*. It is the Way to bring up a *Race of steady Adherents to the genuine Principles of Nonconformity*; but it is not so sure a Method of making them *rational Conformists to Christ's Institutions*. It may teach them to contend with *Fury and Fierceness for Liberty*; but will hardly lead them to *Truth*, or *enable them to support it*.

The Sum of this Matter in relation to the Subscription is this; If you do not believe the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, or any other Article of the *Catholick Christian Faith*; if you do not believe any of those other Doctrines, which in the Judgment of the Church of *England*, declar'd in her Articles, are *agreeable to the Word of God*; or, if you resolve *not to submit to the Rules of our Church*, and the *lawful Governors* therein appointed; then, I say, *you are not a proper Person* to be admitted into the Ministry of our Church. And you know, the very End, and Design of our Declarations and Subscriptions, is to keep such Persons *from our Ministry*. And what Harm is there in this, unless you can shew that *your Assistance* is wanted, and that Religion suffers by your Exclusion? And if you should think *you have Reason* to be angry at this, I beseech you, tell me, what has any *Layman* to do with it? By what *Medium* will you prove, that because *you must not* be admitted to our Ministry, therefore *another Man* ought to *separate from our Communion*? Except you can shew that the Man cannot be saved under the Ministry of *any other Person*.

But tho' you are a professed Enemy to Declarations and Subscriptions, because they are used by our Church,

Church, and, it seems, keep *you* from our Ministry ; you like them well enough, when *you yourselves* use them. For as the Truth will sometimes come out, you say, p. 21, “ Senior Pastors examine the Candidates in the Languages, Philosophy, and Divinity.” And p. 22, that “ a fourth [Minister] desires an Account of his Faith.” And Dr. *Calamy* in his Account of the Protestant Dissenters, annex’d to the *Plain Reasons*, p. 9, says, “ The Candidates are ordained “ after making a publick Confession of that Faith in “ which they ENGAGE to make it their Business to “ instruct others.” And, as I am informed, the common Way is, for the Candidate to produce an Account of his Faith in *his own Hand Writing*. If so, this seems to be pretty much in the *Nature of a Subscription* ; only it is more liable to *Deceit* and *Evasion* than our Way. But to what Purpose is the Candidate required to *give* this Account, if they who demand it are not to *judge* of it ? If they do not approve of the Candidate’s Faith, I presume they do not ordain him. How then can you consistently declaim against the Church for doing that by a proper Authority, which, from your own Confession, it is plain, by your own Authority *you practise among yourselves*. At present we know where to find the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, viz. in her *Creeeds*, and *Articles* ; but if we were to throw aside our *Declarations* and *Subscriptions*, according to your *modest* Proposal, and receive all that would come in, it would be as difficult to know the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, as it is at present to know the Religion of any *English Separatist*. And if the Church of *England* were to require no more of those who are to be admitted into her Ministry, than only a bare Profession that *they believe their Bible* ; Tell us, I beseech you, what Security that would be ? There is not a single *Quaker* in the Kingdom, nor in any of its remotest Provinces, but what would solemnly affirm that *He believes his Bible* ; (reserving however to himself the Privilege of expounding it, as his own perverse

perverse Spirit shall direct him) so that, were we to comply with your unreasonable Proposal, might it not probably follow, that some might be admitted to our Ministry, who might be no more, or no better Christians, than our *Dissenting Quakers* are?

And after all your declaiming against our Articles, if you are a *dissenting Minister*, out of the *thirty-nine*, you have yourself subscribed *thirty-five* Articles and a *half*, for you are not entitled to a *Toleration* without it. Nay, Dr. *Calamy* answers for the Separatists, that notwithstanding the Differences among themselves, "they generally agree in the Doctrinal Articles of the Church of *England* which they subscribe." This might furnish me with a fair Occasion for retorting all your own worst Invectives against the English Clergy, where you *injuriously* represent them as *not believing* what they subscribe: But I shall leave your own Reflection to supply what might be said upon this Head.

The *Third* general Hardship, is, that Ministers "are oblig'd to promise and swear Obedience to the Bishops and Ordinary according to the Canons." And you think, or say, p. 31. "They are a Sort of blind and rash Oaths, when Men swear Reverence and Obedience to the *Successors* of Bishops and Ordinaries, tho' they know not who or what manner of Persons they will be." Yet, I doubt not but you have taken the Oaths to the King of Great Britain and his *Successors*, tho' you know not *who or what manner of Persons they will be*; and it lies upon you to shew that these Oaths are more *blind and rash* in one Case than in the other.

You run off strangely to the common Chit-chat of the *Separatists*, p. 33, which is propagated so often from one to another, that, I profess, I am sometimes almost tempted to think that *many* of them believe it themselves. Concerning this See *Short Ans.* p. 49, &c. and the *Postscript*.

This *Grand Hardship* consists of no fewer than *Ten* several *smaller Hardships*. But most of these will pack
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together; the first, second, third, fourth, fifth and tenth, run all upon the same Footing. For the *pretended* Hardship is, that if the Canons against *Schismatics*; and the *open Impugners* and *Depravours* of the Liturgy, Articles, Rites and Ceremonies, &c. of the Church of *England*, should be *executed*, then, by the Oath of Canonical Obedience, a conforming Minister may be oblig'd to *publish a Sentence of Excommunication* against his old Friends, the several Offenders before-mention'd.

It is probable this Objection had a considerable Weight with the *Nonconforming* Ministers in 1662; Because, *They* had some Reason to expect that these Canons *would be* rigorously executed. Most of the Persons who were of any Eminence in the Church at *that* Time, had suffer'd severely for their Consciences in those godly Times of *Reformation*, during the pious Usurpation of that *Religious* Prince Oliver *Cromwel*; whose Zeal for *Justice and Religion*, as if you were possessed of all the Steadiness of a *Quaker's* Assurance, you are not ashamed to extoll, p. 14. And while their Wounds were *fresh and bleeding*, and the Smart of them *yet continued*, considering the Frailty of human Nature, and judging of others by themselves, the old *Noncon.* Ministers might well suspect, that their Friends would *legally* be made to feel *some* of those Evils, which they had *illegally* inflicted on the *then present* Governors of the Church. But what is this to the *present Separatists*, who very well know, by an Experience of more than *half a Century*, that these Laws *will not* be executed; nay more, that by the Act of *1 W. & M.* they *cannot* be executed? I dare say, Sir, you would have been under no Apprehensions of an *Ecclesiastical Censure*, even for *this* Performance, on which I am now remarking, tho' you had put your Name to it. With what Justice then, can you urge this as a Plea for your present Nonconformity?

There was another Reason why the old Nonconformists scrupled this Oath of *Canonical Obedience*, viz.

Because

Because it was inconsistent with that execrable Obligation which *most* or *many* of them had enter'd into by swearing to the *solemn League and Covenant*; for all those that were not perswaded of the *Unlawfulness* of *that Oath*, must think themselves bound by it; and all such, if they had any regard to Conscience, *could not possibly*, until they were convinced of its *Unlawfulness*, take *this Oath*, which was contrary to it. And I do in my Conscience believe, that their *prior Obligation to that Covenant*, which, you know, was One of the *five Reasons for Nonconformity*, had more Weight with the *moderate and conscientious Nonconformists*, than all the *other four* put together. I have mention'd these Things, because whenever you are excusing your Nonconformity by the *Authority and Example* of those *ejected Ministers*, I desire your Readers to observe that these *two main Things*, *peculiar to them*, made *their Case* very widely different from what *yours* is now.

But as to *all* the Canons you object to, they are such as *every* regular, and settled Church, *has*, and *will* insist upon, whether its Form of Government be *Episcopal*, or *Presbyterian*: All the *Presbyterian Churches* abroad require the *like*, the *same*, or in some respects even *stricter Oaths and Subscriptions*, than those which the Church of *England* requires. This Mr. *Bingham* has shewn particularly in respect of the *French Churches*; and it may be seen more at large in Mr. *Quick's Synodicon*. So that for the *same Reasons* that you pretend you cannot conform to *our Church*, you would be oblig'd not to conform to *them*. But you will allow it to be *lawful* to conform to *those Churches*; and therefore it seems to be incumbent on you, to clear yourself of the Inconsistency of opposing us with those Reasons which will hold equally strong, if not stronger, against *those Churches* with which you hold it *lawful* to communicate. And truly you would do well to tell us, from whence it should fairly come to pass, that the Principles of an *English Presbyterian* should be so different as they are, from those of

all other *Presbyterians* that are, I think, any where to be found throughout the Christian World.* For, till

* A Gentleman of some Note among the Dissenters, that has not been very eminent for his *Caltness* or *Impartiality* heretofore, *Years and Experience* having *soften'd his Mind*, has lately reviewed the Case of Subscriptions, as He says, *calmly and impartially*. This Gentleman, by Name *Mr. Samuel Chandler*, agrees, p. 28. That Subscription is much more easy to be complied with in the Church of England, than it was in the reformed Church of France; and I will add, says he,—than it now is in the Church of Scotland; and that therefore, thus far I prefer the Church of England to them both. And he further confesses, p. 147, That upon the Dissenters Principles, had we lived in France, we must have been Dissenters from her, for the same Reasons, as we are from the Church of England here. But this Confession was squeez'd and extorted from him; for he was oblig'd either to say this, or to give up the Pretence for separating on Account of our Subscriptions. And tho' I have no Doubt but *Mr. Chandler* speaks his own present Sentiments, He must excuse me if I do not believe that these are the Sentiments of the Dissenters in general, unless they have changed them very lately, of which they have hitherto given us no publick Intimation that I know of. I presume *Mr. Pierce* may be supposed to have been as well acquainted with their Sentiments a few Years ago, as *Mr. Chandler* can be now; and in his Vindication, he runs on all the Way in another Strain; and particularly in respect to the Church of Scotland, in his Dedication, he testifies the sincere Affection, not of his own Heart only, but of the Dissenters in general towards them,—and what remains, says he, but that We who are knit to you in the same Faith, Worship, Form of Government, Discipline, Designs, and Brotherly Love, should experience your mutual Affection and Assistance? And imputes it to the ill Usage of his Adversaries, that the Order of the Dissenting Church has not been more agreeable to that which is in use in Scotland, and in other reformed Countries. It is true, *Mr. Chandler* speaks in the plural Number, and seems to answer for his Brethren in general; but he must pardon me, if I think it not unlikely, from the Transaction alluded to in *Mr. White's* Dedication, that *Mr. Chandler* may take upon him to say more for them, than they would choose to say for themselves. I will not here enquire whether the Design of that Negotiation was to procure a general Union; or to pave the Way for a separate Peace; nor do I know whether *Mr. Chandler* has suffer'd any Rebuke from his Brethren for that Affair; or whether this Pamphlet be intended to reinstate him in their Favour: But I have been credibly inform'd, that the Dissenters in general were unacquainted with those Overtures, they denied that any such were made, and when that could be done

till this be done, in our private Opinions of those Gentlemen, of whom we have upon *other Accounts the greatest Esteem*, we are oblig'd either to bear hard upon their Sincerity, which we are loath to do; or else, to resolve the whole of their Nonconformity into the *Prejudice of Education* alone; and *this*, I think, is often made to bear more than it can well carry. I might here rest this Matter; but cannot forbear taking Notice, that, p. 38, you do not produce the least Proof to shew that our Church Government is not consistent with the Institution of *Christ*; so that the Answer might as well have been *Yes*, as *No*. And yet in the next Answer, as if this were fully proved, we are told there is too much Reason for pronouncing it *Anti-christian*. As I said before, there are many Instances of *such conclusive Arguments*, but I must not take up the Reader's Time in remarking upon them all.

However, your manner of handling the *Seventy-second Canon*, which makes the *ninth Canonical Hardship*, deserves some Notice. You say, p. 47. By this Canon Ministers, "without Licence from the Bishop, must not so much as keep a private Fast, or be present at any, or at any Meeting for Conference and mutual Improvement, or so much as attempt to cast out *the Devil*, tho' he be ever so troublesome, frightful, and mischievous in the Parish." I am at a Loss to know whether you are serious in this latter Part of your Account of it, so I shall say nothing to *that*. But you go on to declaim in your

done no longer, they very freely said, *Mr. Chandler* deserv'd Reproof for what he had done. Therefore, till more of the Dissenters have confess'd, that they not only dissent from us, but from these other Churches with which they have heretofore thought it lawful to hold Communion, while the same Reasons for Separation subsisted, he must give me Leave to suppose, that He only speaks *his own Sentiments*, or, it may be, of two or three more of his Bosom Friends, and that *the Dissenters in general* do still continue to hold Communion with those Churches to be lawful, tho' they be liable to the same Objections in these Points, as the Church of *England* is.

rambling Way, that *this is depriving Ministers of Part of their Pastoral Office—it is a cruel Attempt to shut up Mens way to Heaven, and bar them from Access to God—it sets the Clergy in a Light too contemptible for any to appear in who are employed in sacred Offices—and is a sad Proof that the Church of England is the best constituted Church in the World!* It is strange you should put yourself into such a Heat upon so trifling an Occasion; your Pupil may think you are in earnest; but don't be frightened, Child; the Gentleman is not *angry*; all these are Words of Course, they mean nothing. This Canon may be left to make its own Defence before an equal Judge; it speaks thus, “ No Minister shall without License and Direction from the Bishop —appoint or keep any Solemn Fasts, either publicly or in any private Houses, other than such as by Law are, or by publick Authority shall be appointed, nor shall be wittingly present at any of them under Pain of Suspension, &c.——Neither shall any Minister not licensed as is aforesaid, presume to appoint, or hold any Meetings for Sermons, commonly termed by some *Prophecies*, or *Exorcises*, in Market Towns, or other Places, under the said Pains: Nor Attempt upon any *Bretence* whatsoever, either of Possession or Obsession, by Fasting and Prayer to cast out any Devil or Devils, under Pain of Imputation of Imposture or Cozenage and Deposition from the Ministry.” You must know it already, so I desire your Reader to observe,

1. That the Canon doth by no means forbid our Ministers from meeting their Parishioners for *Conference and mutual Improvement*, as you are pleased to misrepresent it.

2. That there is much less occasion for *private Fasts* among Us, than there is among You, because of the *Weekly Fast*, and those others, the Observance of which the Church recommends to her Members. You will soon forget that you now object to our having *too few* Fasts, for in a Page or two you will tell us we have *too many*.

3. That

3. That the Canon forbids a private Minister to appoint Fasts by *his own* Authority, (which, for ought I know, he has no Warrant from God to do) or, to keep such as are appointed by others, without proper Authority.

4. That it was prudently done of the Church, to guard her Clergy from incurring the *Imputation of Hypocrisy, Imposture, or Cozenage*, especially as she did not certainly know, who would, and who would not conform.

And lastly, that if they will look farther, and observe what similar Constitutions the *neighbouring Protestant Churches* have made, to which Churches you hold it lawful to conform, they will be thoroughly satisfied that this Canon is not a *valid Ground for Separation*, as you pretend, p. 49.

In the Church of *France*, no private Church might celebrate a Fast, but on great and urgent Occasions; and not then, without first consulting *their Neighbour Churches* *: Upon this Mr. Bingham asks very properly, “Is it not as reasonable to have Recourse to a Bishop in an *Episcopal* Church, as to a *Classis* in a *Presbyterian*?” To come nearer home, we may judge of the Sentiments of the *Kirk of Scotland* by their Directions concerning *secret and private* Worship in *Families*; which Directions were to be observed under Pain of Suspension from the Lord’s Table. From these it appears, that the *Kirk* was so far from allowing of any private Meetings upon Pretence of *Fasts, Prophecies, Exorcises, &c.* that they would not permit any Person from another Family to be present at private *Family-Prayer*. The sixth Direction says, “At *Family-Prayer*, a special Care is to be had that each Family keep *by themselves*; neither requiring, inviting, nor admitting Persons from *diverse Families*, unless it be those who are lodged with them, or at Meals, or otherwise with them upon some

* See Synod of Rochel, c. 3. Art. 21. in *Quick’s Synodicon*, Vol. I. p. 268. and *Bingham’s Apol.* p. 311.

“*lawful Occasion.*” And the seventh is very remarkable, I desire the Reader to observe it, “*Whatsoever hath been the Effects and Fruits of Meetings of Persons of diverse Families in the Times of Corruption or Trouble, (in which Cases many things are commendable which otherwise are not tolerable) yet when God had blessed us with Peace, and the Purity of the Gospel; such Meetings of Persons of divers Families (except in Cases mentioned in these Directions) are to be disapproved, as tending to the Hindrance of the religious Exercise of each Family by itself, to the Prejudice of the publick Ministry, to the renting of the Families of particular Congregations; and in Progress of Time of the whole Kirk.*” It is observable, that the *Act of Assembly* enforcing these Directions bears Date in 1647, and the *Kirk* was so sensible of the Effects and Fruits of *these Meetings*, and of the Use that they had made of them, during the Times of *Corruption*; that as soon as they were possessed of the Reins, and the *Purity of the Gospel*; they took all the Precaution they could to prevent them, which was prudently done.

Your *Fourth* General Hardship is, that Ministers must declare their “*Assent and Consent that every thing in the Book of Articles, Common-Prayer, and Book of Ordination, is agreeable to the Word of God; that they approve of all the Orders contained in them, and will use no other Forms.*”

As to this Matter, *our* Writers have shewn, that the Declaration of unfeigned Assent and Consent required by the *Act of Uniformity*, amounts to just the same as the Subscription required by Canon 36, and *no more*. By both these we allow and declare, 1. That the Book of Common-Prayer, &c. containeth in it nothing *contrary* to the Word of God. 2. That it may lawfully be used. And 3. we promise that we will use the said Form in *publick* Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, and *no other*. And all this a Man may allow and promise, tho’ he should conceive

ceive some Things or Expressions prescribed, either in the Phrases of Common-Prayer itself, or in the pointing, or Translation of the Psalms, or other Scripture, not to be suitable to his own Apprehensions or Desires; provided he judges the whole to be *free from Sin*, and *not repugnant* to God's Word: "Even as such learned Men, as *Dr. Falkner adds*, who may judge our last Translation of the Bible not to have fitly expressed the Sense of some difficult Places, may yet both unfeignedly assent and earnestly persuade to the diligent Use thereof, as knowing it to be of excellent Advantage, &c."* —So that by this we do *not say*, as you assert, that there are *no Faults at all*; much less do we put the Liturgy upon a level with the Word of God, as you most unjustly charge us; we only say, it is *not repugnant* to it, and it may be lawfully used. Yet, Sir, which is more astonishing, you are not ashamed to insinuate, p. 54. that the Church requires her Clergy to assent to every Thing in the Liturgy, *as necessary to Salvation!* Whether your Note about *Bartholomew-Day* was intended to widen the Breach between *your People* and *Us*, you know best; sure I am, it could not be intended to close it. If the Fact there related were true, it certainly was wrong: But *it has been denied*, and is not very probable in itself, for there were *five Months* for the printing and dispersing the Book of Common-Prayer. And whether it were so or not, it neither concerns *You* nor *Me*, for any fair Purpose, to enquire.

For the present I shall leave your particular Objections to the Liturgy, and consider them afterwards all together. We proceed now to your Reasons for dissenting peculiar to the Laity, p. 80. It might be expected that you who represent the Clergy of the establish'd Church, as a set of *ignorant, illiterate, silly Persons*, should be *critically exact* in your own Language: But I shall not enquire with what *Propriety* all these Reasons are said to be *peculiar to the Laity*, when

* See *Libertas Ecclesiastica*, p. 94.

several of them do *equally* affect the separating *Ministers*. I shall proceed to observe, as to your *first* Reason, that your Doctrine of *moral Reliques*, and *disgustful Ministrations*, how well soever it be calculated to suit the *Palate* of the *giddy and capricious Multitude*, would not be endured in *any other Protestant Church in Christendom*; nor, is it agreeable to the *Practice* of the *English Separatists* themselves. The Doctrine and Practice of foreign Churches is utterly against *all* such Practices as you would hereby for your own Gain encourage. And the Sentiments of the neighbouring *Kirk of Scotland*, may be gathered from their *third* Direction about private Worship, where they declare, “ The Charge and Office of interpreting the Holy Scriptures, is a Part of the Ministerial Calling, which none *howsoever otherwise qualified* should take upon him in *any* Place, but He that is *duly called* thereunto by God and *his Kirk*. ”——And as to the People’s resorting to such Persons as their Fancy or Humour shall lead them to, they made an Act *against* such as *withdraw themselves from the publick Worship in their own Congregations*. Which Act ordains “ every Member in every Congregation to keep their own *Paroch Kirk*, to communicate there in the Word and Sacraments; and if any Person or Persons shall hereafter usually *absent* themselves from *their own* Congregation, except in urgent Cases, made known to, and approved by the *Presbytery*; the Ministers of those Congregations whereunto they resort, shall both in publick by preaching, and in private by Admonition, shew their Dislike of their *Withdrawing from their own Minister*; that in so doing, they may witness to all that hear them, their due Care to strengthen the Hands of the Fellow-Labourers in the Work of the Lord, and their Detestation of any Thing that may tend to *Separation*.—Like as the Minister of that Congregation from which they do withdraw, shall labour first by private Admonition to reclaim them; and if any,

“ after

“ after private Admonition given by their own Pastor,
 “ do not amend, in that Case the Pastor shall declare
 “ the aforesaid Persons to *the Session*, who shall cite
 “ and censure them, as *Contemners of the comely Order*
 “ *of the Kirk.*” Here is not the least Provision made
 for the *moral Relish*.

But let us go on to the *second Reason*, “ The Right
 “ of choosing their own Ministers.” This is nearly
 related to the former; and accordingly, in descanting
 upon it, you run into what is as applicable to *that*, as
 to *this*. I know not whether you deceive your People
 more in any one Thing than in this. For this pre-
 tended indefeasible Right, *is not exercised by them* in
 the Latitude that you perswade them to *believe it is*.
 It is true only of a *very small Number*, in each Congre-
 gation; this *very small Number*, and sometimes a *sin-
 gle Man*, is to all Intents and Purposes *the Patron*
 that presents to the *Meeting*: The *Rest* conform their
moral Relishes to the *Taste* of those *Few*, or that *One*;
 and again, the *moral Relishes* of the succeeding Inha-
 bitants in the Neighbourhood of any *Meeting*, conform
 themselves to the *Taste* of their Predecessors, or *such*
of them as appointed the *Pastor*. Whereas, according
 to the *true Latitude* of your Doctrine, this Right in
 its *full Extent*, is not only *indefeasible*, but ought to be
incommunicable to any other Person, since *my Palate*
 may nauseate what *another Man* may be fond of. And
 if the *Taste* of your People should *alter*, or your Mini-
 stration become *disgustful*, then, they have a *Right*, as
 you pretend, to discharge their *Pastor*, with as much
 Ease as a Man would do his *Footman*. But this you
 are wise enough to guard against; and yet, your
 People are so unaccountably infatuated, that you make
 them *believe* they choose their *Pastor*, as much as they
 do their *Physician*. See *Mr. White's first Letter*, p. 41.
 and his *second*, p. 6, &c.

Mr. Chandler, before he enters upon his main Point,
 premises some Observations in relation to *Mr. White's*
 Letters; and as I have frequent Occasion to refer to
 D 2 them,

them, I beg Leave to put in a Word or two in Answer to the *first*, which is the most considerable. His Observation is this :

“ That the Design of his [*Mr. White's*] three Letters, by the two first of which he justly *thinks* *he had sufficiently exercised the Patience of his Reader*, doth not seem candid, and suitable to the Character of a rational Divine: 'Tis, as his Title-Page informs us, to reflect back the Objections of the Dissenters against the Church of *England*, upon themselves; and particularly to retort the Charge of *Imposition*.” We see then, *Mr. Chandler* is not yet quite *calm* enough; for *Mr. White's* Apology for the Length of his Letters being so modest, he could not suffer it to pass without a Sneer: And if with his *Years and Experience* he had acquired a little more *Impartiality*, he would not so *partially* have represented the Design of these *three* Letters. The *First* Letter relates *only* to *Dr. Watts's* Book, and the comparative Excellence of the Lives of Churchmen and Dissenters: The *Second* and *Third* Letters are, as the Author tells us in the Title-Page, “ to *refute* the great and popular Pleas of Dissenters against Communion with the Church of *England*, and *reflect* them back upon themselves.” Supposing then that *Mr. White* knew his own Design, it was not only, 1. To *reflect* back the Objections of the Dissenters upon themselves, as *Mr. C.* represents it; but it was also, 2. to *refute* their Pleas, and likewise, 3. to examine *Dr. Watt's* Book, and 4. to consider the popular Argument, or Prejudice, arising from the supposed real better Lives of Dissenters, in Favour of their Churches. And tho' *Mr. Chandler* may, I own, I cannot see but these are four very good Designs; as candid as any fair Designs *can* be; nor are they, to my Apprehension, in the least unsuitable to the Character of a rational Divine.

Nay, I am persuaded *Mr. White's* Design would have been so, tho' it had been as *Mr. Chandler* represents it, only to reflect back the Objections of the

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Dissenters. For, as we have seen the Charge, let us see how it is supported.

Mr. Chandler goes on thus ; “ Supposing he had done, or could do this, What then ? ” Why then, in this respect He has gained his Point ; He has done what he undertook to do ; and shewn, that the Dissenters pretend to separate from the Church of *England*, for such Reasons, as do hold equally strong against their own Churches.

He asks again, “ Would this vindicate the Impositions of the Church ? ” No. Nor can I remember that *Mr. White* has said it would. In the Preface to the second Letter he says,—*The Title-Page intimates, that it is both defensive and offensive. In the defensive Part, wherein I undertake to vindicate the established Church—I am generally brief, that having already been executed.—But in the other Part, wherein I retort their Objections, and shew them as strongly conclusive against Communion with their own Churches, I have enlarged more.—So that tho’ Mr. White’s two last Letters were written with this double Design, Mr. Chandler plainly overlook’d one of them, and therefore we may easily excuse his blaming Mr. White for not pursuing it.* But *Mr. C.* goes on,

“ If we have some Usages in our Congregations, that resemble those which we blame in them ; are those Usages ever the better in them, because there is something like them in Us ? ” No, not at all. But this shews the Absurdity and Perverseness of those Pretences which you urge as the Reasons of your Separation. In this Case, we may use *St. Paul’s* Expressions, *Wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself, for thou that judgest dost the same Things.*

“ Or, doth our imitating those Practices we complain of, shew them to be reasonable, or agreeable to the Christian Rule ? ” No. But it shews, that you cannot reasonably separate on Account of those Practices ; which is all that *Mr. White* endeavour’d to shew from them,

“ He

“ He might indeed, if this was our Case, justly
 “ blame us for a self-contradictory Conduct; but I
 “ always thought, that to recriminate and vindicate
 “ were two very different Things.” *Mr. Chandler*
 may continue to think so; in both these Points I
 agree with him. I should digress too far, were I to
 consider the rest of his Observations.

Mr. Chandler is in very good Hands; I make no
 Question but *Mr. White* will give a good Account of
 him; so for the present I take my Leave and return to
 my Author.*

One Thing you should *not have said*, because you
 might have known that it was *not so*; viz. That in our
 Church the Laity have *no tolerable Way to help them-*
selves from an ignorant, unacceptable, or vicious Minister,
but by turning Dissenters.†

In the same Page, in order to prove that the People
 have a *Right to choose their Ministers*, you go about to
 shew, that the Bishops are not so much as *proper*
Judges to determine who *are fit to be ordained Ministers*.
 The Reasons you give, are,

1. Because “ they have not the Gift of discerning
 “ Spirits, so that they may be greatly deceived in the
 “ Qualifications of Candidates.” but the *People*, I sup-
 pose, who you would have to determine this instead
 of the *Bishops*, cannot be deceived.

2. Because, “ many are ordained to the sacred
 “ Function, who are utterly unworthy of it.” But if
 the *People* were to ordain them, the *People* are infalli-
 ble, and they *cannot* be deceiv’d; it is like.

“ But lastly, how proper Judges soever the Bishops
 “ may be of Men’s Talents, or Dispositions, and how
 “ cautious soever they may be in conferring Orders—
 “ they cannot on *these* Accounts, have the least Title
 “ to *intrude* any Man upon others as a Pastor.” The
 Word *intrude* is somewhat too coarse, but if they

* See Chandler’s Case of Subscriptions calmly and impartially
 review’d, p. 3.

† See Short Ans. p. 60, 61.

cannot on *these Accounts*, this doth not prove that they cannot on *others*; and therefore it is *not very conclusive*.

But perhaps you were the less careful about your *Reasoning* on this Point, because you can prove it by *Scripture*. If you can, that will be decisive.

“*Qu.* On what Foundation stands a People’s Right of choosing their own Pastors?” This is awkwardly and quaintly express’d, but mind the Answer; “1. They are the Churches Servants, 2 Cor. iv. 5. *Our selves your Servants for Jesus’s Sake.* 2. The People pay them their Wages, *Luke x. 7. The Labourer is worthy of his Hire.* 3. The People’s own Interest is depending, of which themselves are Judges [For] *Heb. xiii. 17. They watch for your Souls.*” Very prettily made out truly. Because the Pastor is the Church’s Servant; because the People pay him; and because He watches for their Souls; therefore, the People are proper Judges of the Pastor’s Qualifications and Abilities, and have a Right to choose whom they please for their Pastor. From hence I take Occasion profoundly to admire your Skill as a *Divine*: And if I may have the Liberty to say so, I think you have erected this Right upon a rotten and tottering Foundation. For if these Texts will prove what you produce them for; they will prove that the People of your Congregation have a Right to choose the Pope, if they will own his Authority. For in his humble Fits, He styles himself *Servus Servorum Dei*. If they submit to him, he’ll take care that *they shall pay him*. And He will tell you that *He watches for the Souls of all true Believers*. So let them be ready against the next Demise of the *Triple Crown*. And that Pastors were not chosen in the Primitive Church as you represent it, the Author of the *Original Draught* hath shewn.*

The *Third Reason* for Dissenting peculiar to the Laity (for which Reason separating Ministers are no Way concerned in it) is *Free-Prayer: A Technical*

* See the *Original Draught* of the Primitive Church, *ch. 3.*

Term to exprefs those Effufions, which in feparate Congregations are, or are faid to be, made *ex tempore*, and not to be pre-compos'd.

For this Objection I refer you to *Mr. White's* fecond Letter, and *Short Anf.* p. 24, &c. But give me Leave to ask, How do you know that *Kings* under the Old Testament, ufed *Free Prayer*, in Oppofition to *pre-composed Forms*, as you are pleas'd to affert, p. 86. As to *Prophets* they are out of the Queftion, and fo are all other Perfons who were confeffedly *infpired*. For I think you will not pretend to *Infpiration*; tho' I won't be pofitive. It feems odd that you could find no more than *one or two fhort Forms of Bleffing the People*, Num. vi. 23. Deut. xxi. 7, 8. and *some* of the *Pfalms*. You did not defire to find them; for if you had look'd carefully, you might have found more. *Vener, Bennet*, even the *Sh. Anf.* or almoft any of our Divines, will help you to them. But you *did find fome of the Pfalms*, you might have faid *moft*, if not *all* of them, for I dare fay they were all together, and then you might yourfelf have produced about an *hundred and fifty Forms* from the Old Testament.

You fay, p. 87, " The chief Ufe of prefcribed Forms is to be a Help to an ignorant, cold, and lazy Clergy." And that " the plainly evil Tendency of confining Men to them, is to encourage or occafion an illiterate, lazy, lifelefs Clergy." You muft be very fond of thefe abufive Epithets, when you could prevail with yourfelf to repeat them within a few Lines. But *Calvin* had a better Head, and better Views, and He could contrive *some other Ufe* for a ftated Liturgy. And that you may not charge me with mifrepresenting him, I'll give it your Reader in *Mr. Bingham's* Tranflation. In his Letter to the Protector *Somerfet*, he writes thus, " As to what concerns a Form of Prayer and Ecclefiaftical Rites, I highly approve of it, that there be a certain Form from which the Minifters be not allowed to vary: That firft fome Provision may be made to help the

" Sim-

“ *Simplicity and Unskilfulness of some.* Secondly, that
 “ the *Consent and Harmony* of the Churches one with
 “ another may appear. And lastly, that the *capricious*
 “ *Giddiness* and *Levity of such as affect Innovations* may
 “ be prevented.” This *last* is to the full as cogent a
 Reason as the *first*, or *more* so, because it is easier to
 guard against ignorant and insufficient Men, than it
 is against *pragmatical, conceited, and self-sufficient* Men;
 who are ever fond of their own Conceits, and incess-
 antly endeavouring to obtrude them upon others.
 And whether it is not better to attend the publick
 Worship, when a Man knows the Petitions in which
 he is himself to join, than it is to go *only* to hear
 another Man pray, when at the same time it is not
 unlikely that He cannot heartily *concur* with the Pastor,
 or join in *his* Requests, I would leave to your unhappy
 Pupil himself, when he comes to Years of Discretion,
 to determine. For, if he can get free from the other
 Fetters that may prevent his Conformity, I make no
 Doubt but he will judge *our* Method most *rational*,
 and most *edifying*.

P. 91, You say, “ We read in Scripture of Con-
 “ gregations saying *Amen* to, or concurring with
 “ Prayers they never read or heard before :” And
 refer to six several Places of Scripture as Proofs of it.
 This looks well ’till we come to examine them; but
 then it appears, that 1 *Kings* viii. is not to the Pur-
 pose, for *Solomon* prayed in the Presence of all the
 Congregation; and afterwards He and all *Israel*
 offer’d Sacrifices. But not to insist on his *divine Inspi-*
ration, How does it appear that they said *Amen*, or
 concurred with his Prayer; unless you mean that after
 they had heard his Prayer, they thought it a *good one*?
 (And few good Judges would allow the *genuine,*
modern, extempore Prayers, to be so.) But this is a
 very different Thing from *joining with him* in it,
 which was what you were to prove, to make it perti-
 nent to the Matter in Hand.

1 *Chron.* xvi. 36. proves quite *against* you: For this was deliver'd beforehand to *Asaph*, v. 7. probably to be set to Musick; so that it was, certainly, *pre-composed*; and it is most likely that it was made publick before it was used.

2 *Chron.* xx. 51—3. is not to the Purpose; for it does not appear that the People *joined* in the Prayer; tho' *Jehosaphat* spoke in the plural Number.

Ch. xxx. v. 18. 'tis expressly said that *Hezekiah* pray'd for them, but there is no Intimation that they prayed for themselves; and v. 27. The Priests blessed the People: No Doubt, in that particular *Form*, which God had expressly appointed.

Ezra ix. 15. is not to the Purpose, any more than 2 *Chron.* xx. And 1 *Cor.* xiv. 16. St. Paul speaks of Blessing with some *extraordinary Assistance* of the Holy Spirit as to the Matter, but doing it in an *unknown Tongue*, and so not applicable to the present Case. However this is clear from hence, that in St. Paul's Judgment, the Hearer ought to *understand* him who prays; and, depend on it, the *best*, the *only sure* Way of doing that, is to know beforehand what Words he will use.

At the next Reason, p. 93, you refer us to *Chap.* 2. *Sett.* 4. And that we may take all your Objections to the Liturgy together, we will go back to p. 54. where the

First Objection, to avoid all Appearance of Method, is to a short Rubrick at the End of the Office of *Baptism*: Which says, "It is certain by God's Word that Children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual Sin, are undoubtedly saved." This you will not allow,—it seems to You not agreeable to the Word of God. And this being the fifth Objection of the Plain Reasoner, I refer you to *Short Ans.* p. 36.

As the *First* Objection came from the End of this Office, the *Second* is fetched from the Beginning of it; for p. 56. The second Point which seems not agreeable to God's Word is, The Use of Godfathers and Godmothers in

in Baptism. And yet in your Note, which is to this Effect, That whereas in the Primitive Church Parents sometimes died when their Children were young, Sponsors were introduced to secure such Children a Christian Education; you say, “against Sponsors in *such Cases, the Dissenters have no Objection.*” Very well, for these Reasons, as we do not pretend to know how long any Child’s Parents will live, We make use of Sponsors in *all Cases*; by this we provide against the worst, and if one could admire at any thing in an English *Separatist*, one would wonder that you are not ashamed to use so many Words, and try so many Shifts, in cavilling against so prudent a Provision. And yet you have contrived so as to bring forth *five* Objections to it: But if it had not been started before, you must have rack’d your Invention some time before you could have hit upon your *second* Objection, *viz.* “By Canons 68 and 69, Ministers cannot refuse any Children, tho’ the Offspring of *Jews, Mahometans, Heathens, Atheists*, if brought to be baptiz’d with Godfathers.” A very pretty Objection to *the Use of Godfathers!* Well, but if it be no Objection to *that*, it is to *those Canons*, and we won’t insist upon *Punctilio’s*. But it happens that you mistake the Sense of those Canons; Mr. *Baxter* led you into it, He did the same thing. To this Mr. *Bingham* says, “I could hardly have thought it possible for any Man to have put such a perverse Interpretation upon the Words of an innocent Canon. But it is Mr. *B——*’s ordinary Way of disputing, to strain Words to an unnatural Sense, and then fight against his own Chimæra’s. Who, besides him, would have thought, or said, that the Children of Jews and Infidels as such, were compris’d in this Canon, when it is so plain that it speaks only of such as have a just Right to Christian Baptism? Whom the Minister is not to refuse, or delay to christen, when they are offer’d, for any private Reason of his own; such Reasons suppose as was that of *Snake*, in

“ Queen Elizabeth’s Time, who, as Bishop Bancroft
 “ informs us, would not baptize a certain Child be-
 “ cause the Parents insisted upon having him called
 “ *Richard*.” You see, Sir, as your Objection contains
 only a flat Assertion without any thing to support it,
 I oppose this Gentleman’s Authority to *yours*, which
 for the present may be sufficient. Only I must ob-
 serve, whereas you say these Children are to be bap-
 tized, (as they certainly *are not*, except in some Cases
 which you yourself would allow of) *who have none to*
bring them up in the Christian Faith : Here you strangely
 forget the very Persons you are arguing against, *the*
Godfathers and Godmothers, whose Business, you know,
 it is, *to see that the Child be christianly and virtuously*
brought up. By this, you seem fairly to confess, that
 this Objection was most impertinently brought in here.

In the *Third Objection*, p. 58, “ The Godfathers,
 “ &c. personate the Child without any proper Autho-
 “ rity.” But it is certain they are delegated by the
 Parents, and have all the Authority that *they* can give
 them. We have your own Confession in the Note,
 p. 94. that *Christian Parents have a natural Right to*
dispose of, to dedicate to God, and covenant for their own
Children : And which Way will you prove, that they
 cannot delegate this Right to others ?

You say, p. 60, “ Ministers must refuse to baptize
 “ Children unless with Sponsors.” Which Assertion
 is partly true, and partly false. True in respect of
publick Baptism in Churches ; False in respect of *private*
Baptism in Houses ; as the *second Rubrick* before the
 Office for private Baptism will shew. By this, Mini-
 sters are to warn the People, *that without like great*
Cause and Necessity (such as is mention’d in the fore-
 going Rubrick, *i. e.* such as the Curate shall approve
 of) *they procure not their Children to be baptised at Home*
in their Houses : But when Need shall compel them so to
 do, then Baptism shall be administered on this Fashion. And
 that is, without either Godfathers, &c. or, *the Sign of*
the Cross. I never did meet with any Person, where I
 have

have been concerned, that scrupled either of these Things; but if I had, and were perswaded of his Sincerity, I should have thought myself hereby justified in thus indulging him. And if this be so, there is an End of this, and of another Objection that will be mentioned presently. To this, I know, you are ready to reply as Dr. Calamy did to Mr. Ollyffe, that the *only* Cause of baptizing Children at Home, is supposed here to be *the Danger of Death by Sicknefs*, because the Minister is directed to use the *Lord's Prayer* by the following Rubrick, and so many of the Collects appointed to be said at publick Baptism, as *the Time and present Exigence will suffer*, which supposes the Child to be *in Danger of Death*; and so doth that Rubrick which says, *if the Child—do afterward live*, it is expedient that it be brought into the Church—which supposes the Child to have been in *Danger of dying*. But all that can be collected from hence is, that this is supposed to be the *most common* Reason, and therefore these Provisions are made for it. That it was not supposed by the Compilers of the Liturgy to be *the only Reason* for private Baptism, seems to me as evident as may be, from hence, that it will be a sufficient Reason for private Baptism if it be some great Cause, *like* to that mention'd in the first Rubrick, which is, *such* as with the Approbation of the Curate is a *reasonable Cause* for deferring the Child's Baptism; but the Sicknefs of the Child, can never be a Reason for *deferring* Baptism, tho' it may for *hastning* it. And therefore, *besides* the Necessity that arises from the *Danger of the Child's Death*, *such other Cause* as is approv'd by the Curate to be reasonable, seems to me from this Rubrick, to be a sufficient Reason for his baptizing a Child *privately*.

As to the rest of your Objections I refer you to *Short Ans.* p. 30, &c.

The *Third Fault* in the Common-Prayer which *seems not agreeable to the Word of God*, is "the Imposition and Use of the Sign of the Cross." You make
this

this liable to three Objections, 1. It is making a new Law. 2. It is making a new Sacrament. 3. Ministers *must* deny Baptism to all those Children, whose Parents refuse to have them crossed. The last of these I have just now shewed to be false. For the others see *Short Ans.* p. 29, and *White's Letters*.

In one of your Notes, p. 62 (and I must say all your Notes are extremely curious) you are pleased to quote Bishop *Taylor*, in order to prove moreover, that this Usage is bordering upon *Idolatry*. In the Edition that I have, the Passage may be found *Book 3, ch. 4, p. 326*. But to prevent Mistakes, it will be better to take the Context with us. Bishop *Taylor* produces a Quotation from *Balsamon*, which he translates, "To let a Pidgeon fly, to signify the coming of the Holy Spirit; to light up Candles, to represent the Epiphany; to dress a Bed, to express the secret and ineffable Generation of the Saviour of the World; to which he might have added, says Bishop *Taylor*, to prepare the Figure of the Crucifix, and to bury an Image, to describe the great Sacrifice of the Cross for the Redemption of Mankind; these are Things to no Purpose: Not only for the Levity, and theatrical Gaieties and Representments, unbecomming the Gravity and Purity and Spirituality of Christian Religion; but also the manner of teaching these Truths by symbolical Things and Actions, is too low, too suspicious, too dangerous, to be mingled with the divine Liturgies. Christ may as he please consign his own good Things that he gives us; but He consigns no Good, and represents none, but what also he gives and effects in that Ministration and under that Sign; But a symbolical Rite of human Invention to signify what it doth not effect; and then introduced into the Worship of God, is so like those vain Imaginations and Representments forbidden in the second Commandment, that the very Suspicion is more against Edification, than their Use can pretend to." This is the Passage, and a judicious one it is when taken

taken with the Context, but you quote only the last Part; and by doing it upon this Occasion, you make a strange Representation of the good Bishop, and such as is injurious to his Memory, when you suppose him absurdly and ridiculously speaking of the Second Commandment in relation to the *aerial Sign of the Cross*. Take the whole Passage together and make the most of it. For my Part, I cannot perceive it is any thing to your Purpose: But if you had cast your Eye upon the very next succeeding Page, *there* is a Passage which *is* something to the Purpose. “There
 “ is Reason, *says he*, to celebrate and honour the
 “ Wisdom and Prudence of the Church of *England*,
 “ which hath in all her Offices, retain’d but one Ritual
 “ or Ceremony that is not of divine Ordinance or
 “ Apostolical Practice, and that is, the Cross in Bap-
 “ tism: Which tho’ it be a *significant Ceremony*, and
 “ of no other Use, yet as it is a Compliance with all
 “ ancient Churches, so it is very innocent in itself,
 “ and being *one*, and *alone*, is in no regard troublesome
 “ or afflictive, to those that understand her Power,
 “ and her Liberty, and her Reason.” You see, Sir, it was unlucky that you mention’d Bishop *Taylor*. He best knew his own Meaning, and He was not so inconsiderate and inconsistent a Writer as to declaim against the Practice of the Church, and then in the same Breath to extol her again upon Account of *that* very Practice.

The “ *Fourth Article* in the Common-Prayer which
 “ *does not appear to be agreeable* to the Word of God,
 “ is, *p. 64*, Imposing the Gesture of Kneeling at the
 “ *Lord’s-Supper*.”

This same kneeling at the Sacrament, tho’ it may not seem to an indifferent Person to be a Thing of such great Moment, seems to be one of the most important Points that you complain of, if we may judge by the Use you make of it. This furnishes half your sixth Canonical Hardship, *p. 41*. because, Canon 27, which orders *Schismaticks* not to be admitted to the
 Com-

Communion; forbids us to administer the Sacrament *to any but such as kneel*. In this the Church uses her Right in determining such Gestures as Christ hath left to the Governors of his Church to direct us in; just as the Protestant *Presbyterian* Synod of *St. Maixant*, in 1609, that there might be a *general Uniformity*, enjoins “all Pastors to abstain from any private Methods of their own, and not to bring the People up in Ranks unto the Table, there to sit or stand, but to cause the Faithful to pass one after another up unto it.”* As the Pastors of the *French* Church were sworn to observe this Canon, they must refuse the Sacrament to any Person who would insist upon receiving it *sitting, or kneeling, or coming up three or four abreast*. As to your Objections to the *Posture of kneeling*, they amount to the same as the *Plain Reasoner’s* did, therefore, see *Short Ans.* p. 37.

At the second Appearance, p. 64, “imposing of this Gesture makes *an Error or Fault* in the *Common-Prayer-Book*.” But here you do not offer any thing but what you had asserted, without Proof, at the first mention of it; to which you refer. In your Note you give us a pretty quaint Discourse upon *Politeness, Decency and Good Manners*, one of the last Subjects that I should have expected you would treat of: It is not a little tedious, and I should have taken no Notice of it, were it not for a shocking Passage in it, which borders very near upon Blasphemy; p. 65, where in the Comparison between God and *his* Worshipers, and a King and *his* Subjects, you say, “it would be but ill Manners in the Inferior to offer a *Devoir* which it was not *decent* for the Superior to accept.” When this is applied to the Purpose you bring it for, *the kneeling at the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper*, it contains such a horrid and abominable Idea, that, I beseech you, if you have any Character to lose, to soften it.

* See Quick’s Synodicon, p. 327.

Well, this Posture has done pretty good Service, it has already supplied you with two Reasons, such as they are, for *ministerial Nonconformity*, yet it is lugg'd forth again, p. 97. to make a *fifth* Reason for *Lay-Separation*. Here, in your *long Note*, you have an easy Way of getting rid of that excellent Discourse on this Subject in the *London Cases*, Vol. III. that is, only by saying, it contains much *Trifling*.

Here you say, " Dissenters pretend not, 1. That *Sitting* was *commanded* by our Saviour. Or, 2. That *Kneeling* is *contrary* to any Injunction of his; or, 3. That it is a *Sin* to receive the Elements in *that* Posture." No? What would they have then? They are humourfome, perverse People, and will have nothing to direct them but their own *Fancy* or *Whim*. Well, what *do* they pretend? Why, they pretend " that *Sitting* is a *Gesture properest* to the Occasion." Tho' it expresse *less Reverence*; than any that can be contriv'd. 2. " That it is authorized by the *Example* of Christ, and his Apostles." Which is absolutely *false*. And 3. " That Christians should conform as nearly to this Pattern as can be." Which, as to the present Case, is a Consequence that would by no means follow, tho' the Premises were true. For, in these Circumstantial, where our Lord has not expressly confin'd them, the Governors of *each* Church are at Liberty to appoint such Gestures as seem to them most proper. And the different Practice of the several Protestant Churches abroad, proves this to be the *general Opinion of Protestants*.

But how is your Confession here, that *Kneeling* is *not sinful*, or, *contrary to any Injunction of our Saviour's*, consistent with what you advance, p. 64. That many Dissenters consider it as *unscriptural and unlawful*? In the Remainder of the Note, though you are firmly perswaded that you understand *Good Manners*, you strangely forget the Character you assume, that of a meek and humble Pastor of a Flock of *Christ's* Sheep; and fall abusing People most outrageously,

that have committed no Offence ; and rant and rave and dictate, as if you suppos'd Men were to submit to *your* Authority.

In the last Paragraph, p. 98. you seem to confess this same Kneeling was *earlier than Transubstantiation* ; for now it is *a Question that you wont pretend to determine* ; and there is no doubt but you would pretend to determine it fast enough, if you could do it in *your own* Favour. But now, truly, it is not *a Question of any Importance* ; one would imagine you thought it was, p. 42. where one of the Reasons why many *wise and good* Christians scruple kneeling, is said to be, *because it is an unjustifiable Conformity with the Romanists, in a Usage introduced to favour their absurd Doctrine of Transubstantiation.* Now, I presume, it could hardly be a Usage introduced for *that* purpose, if it were *older than the Doctrine it was introduced to favour.* From whence I begin to suspect *the Wisdom* of these Christians ; and as to their *Goodness*, we have *your* Word for it, the Validity of which upon this Point I will not dispute. However, you have no Regard for the Gesture as an Ancient Custom ; for, *ancient Customs are not the Dissenters Rules.* If they were, the Dissenters observe them wretchedly, and this is always the Case, when *ancient Customs* make *against* them : But since you are in this conceding Mood, I hope you will be prevailed with to retract what you advanc'd, p. 42. That Kneeling was *disagreeing with the Custom of the Church in the first and purest Ages.* To be plain, Sir, you use so many Words, and seem to lay so great a Stress upon this Matter, and use so many Shifts and Querks to prejudice your Pupil against it, that *this*, together with some *other* Circumstances, makes me recommend to your serious Perusal, the Judgment of the *Polish* Divines mention'd in *Sh. Ans.* p. 39.

The *Fifth* Fault in the Common Prayer, is, "The Form of Absolution, in the Visitation of the Sick." The Importance of the last Objection had put you in a Passion, so now you exalt your Stile, and this fifth
sesme

seems far, very far from being agreeable to the Word of God. But it only seems so, and that to none but those who do not properly consider it. You do fairly observe, there is to be a previous Confession of Sins by the Sick Party; and I observe the Clinick is only to be moved to do this, not enjoined or required to do it; Nor yet is this Absolution to be used, unless the Penitent do humbly and heartily desire it. From whence you may see, that it was intended only for very scrupulous Persons, and from hence it happens that it is very rarely used. But perhaps, it sometimes is; What then? You know, there are three Forms of Absolution in the Prayer-Book, and tho' they all differ in Expression, they do all in Sense amount to the same Thing; and two of these you make no Objection to. In the Morning and Evening daily Prayers, the Presbyter declares that, *Almighty God—who—bath given Power—to his Ministers to—pronounce to his People being Penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their Sins, HE pardoneth and absolveth all those that truly repent, &c.—* In the Communion Service he says, *Almighty God—pardon and deliver you from all your Sins—* In this Office, supposing the Case to be as is aforesaid, he says, *Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left Power to his Church to absolve all Sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great Mercy forgive thee thine Offences, and by HIS Authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy Sins, &c.* Now where is the Difference, whether I declare that *Almighty God pardoneth* thee,—or, whether I pray that *He would pardon* thee—or whether I declare that *by his Authority I absolve* thee, or declare thee absolved, *i. e.* upon the Supposition of Faith and Repentance. This Authority is chiefly founded upon *John xx. 23.* But after all; what if this Form of Absolution should only relate to the Censures of the Church, which it may appear from the voluntary Confession of the sick Person, that he hath incurr'd, and from which he may scrupulously desire to be relieved? Why, then, Sir, all your Rant about it for

two Pages together, should only tend to your own Mortification. And I cannot but say, your taking no Notice of this, is by no Means a Proof of your *ingenuous Disposition*, because you must know that this Defence is made by our Apologists. Mr. *Wheatly* particularly observes, as a Proof that this was the Intention of the Form objected to, “ that in the subsequent “ Prayer the Penitent is *still* said most earnestly to “ *desire* Pardon and Forgiveness, which there would “ be no Occasion to do, if he were supposed to be “ *already pardoned and forgiven* by Virtue of the foregoing Absolution.” And again, in this very Prayer the Presbyter offers a special Request, “ that God “ would preserve and *continue* the sick Member in “ the *Unity* of the Church,” which plainly enough supposes, that the foregoing Absolution had been pronounced to restore him to its *Peace*. So that I shall rest this Matter here, and hope you will abate some of those hard Words, that you *honour* the Clergy with on this Occasion.

The *Sixth* Objection is to the Burial-Office. This is *so far from being agreeable to the Word of God*, that it is *contradictory to the whole Tenor of the Gospel, to the Light of Nature and the Reason of Mankind*. And what is all this for? For “ pronouncing, [as, if we “ *will believe you*, we do] all Persons saved and happy “ after Death, except the *unbaptized, excommunicated, “ and self-murderers*.” You alledge three Passages in Support of this Objection. 1. *Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God, of his great Mercy to take unto himself the Soul of our dear Brother here departed, we therefore commit his Body to the Ground;—in sure and certain Hope of the Resurrection to eternal Life*. But you will allow the Expression of God’s *taking to himself*, means no more than taking the Soul out of this World into *Hades*, the State of departed Souls, where, or whatever that is. And we commit the Body to the Ground in *sure and certain Hope* that it will rise again, and of the *Resurrection to eternal Life*; but we
affirm

affirm nothing of the future Condition of the Person deceased. See *Short Ans.* p. 48. Consider also that it is said of Mankind in general without any Distinction, that *the Spirit* [of each Person] *shall* [at their Decease] *return unto God who gave it.* Eccles. xii. 7. And again, that St. Paul had Hope towards God, which, says he, they themselves also allow, that there shall be a Resurrection of the Dead, both of the Just and Unjust, Acts xxiv. 15.

2. *We give thee hearty Thanks for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our Brother out of the Miseries of this sinful World.* This affirms nothing of his future State. See *Sh. Ans.* *ibid.* To which I will add, that you might as well object to the pious Resignation of Holy Job upon hearing of the Death of his Children : *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord,* Job i. 21. for surely, *blessing the Name of the Lord* is equivalent to giving him *hearty Thanks* ; And yet in all this Job sinned not, v. 22. *.

3. We pray, that when we shall depart this Life we may rest in him [Christ] (as our Hope is this our Brother doth) and that at the general Resurrection in the last Day we may be found acceptable in thy Sight, &c.

You make your Stop a little too soon ; we do not pray that we may rest in Christ as the Person departed rests in him ; but those Words are to be consider'd plainly as standing in a *Parenthesis*, by which we only mean to testify some Charity for our deceased Brother-Christian, and then we go on with our Prayer. And as to this Hope which we express of the Person departed, there are, you must allow, *very many Degrees* of Hope : There is the *sure and certain Hope*, such as we express of the general Resurrection ; and there are the *Curæ ambiguae*, the *Spes incerta futuri* ; and sometimes our Hope is so far diminish'd, that it is reduc'd almost to little more than a *Wish*. And no doubt, our Judgment of the departed Person's State must

* See *Vener* on the Place.

rise or sink in Proportion to the Opinion that we had of him. It is true the *Church* has generally more Charity for others, than many of our *Separatists*; nor doth she love to encourage that *virulent Spirit* which *some* of them shew on every Occasion, who seem fond of making their peremptory Decisions, as if they could know *by a Man's Look* what his *final Doom* should be.

The *Seventh Point* that you complain of, *p. 73*, seems *far from being agreeable to the Word of God*; and this is, *reading the Athanasian Creed*. Here you lose all Temper, and assert this to be “a Heap of unscriptural, contradictory, unintelligible Propositions, containing, besides the doctrinal Absurdities, the most unwarrantable, damnable Clauses, repugnant to Reason, to Scripture, to Charity.”—And what not? But what Proof do you offer in Support of all this Railing? Oh, there you desire to be excused, that is not your Method. Instead of this, “the 8th Article obliges Men to *receive and believe the Athanasian Creed*.” But you are extremely mistaken, that Article obliges no Man to *believe* it that is not convinc’d of its Truth; and to *such* the Article does no Injury, nor indeed, to any one else. The Article only declares, that the *three Creeds*, the *Nicene*, the *Athanasian*, and the *Apostles Creed*, *ought thoroughly to be received and believed*; and for this it gives an exceeding good Reason, because *they may be proved by most certain Warrants of Holy Scripture*. I think, all the Protestant Churches abroad, receive and believe these *three Creeds*. To be sure, the *fifth Article* of the *French Confession* allows these *three Creeds* by Name, and that *because they be agreeable to the Word of God*.* And the second Chapter of the *Westminster Confession*, *Art. 3*, speaks almost in the very Words of this Creed. And agreeably to this, the *sixth Answer* of the *Assembly's shorter Catechism* is this, “There are three Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and

* Quick's Synodicon, *p. 7*.

“ the Holy Ghost, the same in Substance, equal in Power and Glory.” And as to the damnatory Clauses that you complain of, a Man may as well repeat them, as he may that Passage in St. *Mark’s* Gospel, xvi. 16. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but He that believeth not, shall be damned.* The same necessary Suppositions that will qualify this Text, will be sufficient to qualify those Clauses, when properly understood.*

In your *Note* you run from the *Creed* to the *Litany*; in this you have discover’d, that *there are direct Addresses to the Son of God, and to the Holy Ghost.* Very true; what follows? Why *those who believe Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God, that is* (as you explain it) *a derived and subordinate Being, will consider this addressing him as supreme God, or equal with the Father, as a Species of Idolatry, and as subverting his Mediatorship.* Will they so? You know that better than I do: But I will answer for all those that *believe with the Catholick Church, that He is equal with the Father as touching his Godhead,* will not be offended with this. And I entreat your Pupil to remember that *the Assembly’s Catechism* has, without Dispute, a higher Authority than *Your’s*; and if he believes with *that*, that the *Three Persons* in the ever blessed Trinity, are *the same in Substance, and equal in Power,* he will not be offended at the Addresses in the *Litany.* Here then I shall leave this Matter, only I beg Leave to ask you a Question or two. In this *Note* do you represent the Sentiments of *all* the Separating Ministers? Or, are they only the Notions of a *few* of you? If the last be the Case, as I believe, Do you not think that you do the *rest* a great Injury, to misrepresent them thus in a Book where you are setting forth the general Principles of the Protestant Dissenters in *England*? However, as these Gentlemen are very able to do themselves Justice, I will say no more, than just to assure them that I have not so bad an Opinion as you would

* See Dr. *Falkner’s* Lib. Eccles. p. 145, &c.

give me of them: For knowing that both *they* and *you* have subscribed to this *very Creed*, if you are entitled to the Indemnity of the Toleration, I will not suspect that more of them do *not believe* it, than such as shall themselves give me Reason for it.

But is not this, Sir, a convincing Proof that Men are apt, in the Warmth of their Zeal, to mix their *own private* Notions, with Matters of general Concern in Religion? And will not this furnish us with a very good Reason, why all Men, being subject to the like Failings and Passions as *you* are, should be restrain'd from venting their own crude and unwarrantable Conceits in the *publick Prayers*, by a stated Form? You must be sensible, that the palpable Discovery you have now made, would give me, here again, a fair Occasion to retort all the Reproaches that you have cast out upon the Clergy of our Church, where you *falsely* represent us in *general* as subscribing what we do not believe. But I shall again leave your own Reflection to supply this, and proceed.

The *Eighth* Objection consists of a *Class of Errors*. These are some smaller Matters that escap'd you before, too weak to stand by themselves, but being bound together, they make up one little Faggot consisting of *four* Particulars. 1. "The *false Rule* for "finding Easter." If you had as great a Regard to Truth, as you might be supposed to have from the Concern that you here express for it, your Book had not been half so large as it is. You say, "It is unlawful for Men to lie deliberately in any Matter, "tho' ever so small." It is true; What then? "If "then the Rule to find Easter——be false, as it is "allowed to be" Allowed to be? By whom? Mr. *Baxter* I suppose, and those that swallow and believe his Dreams without examining. You do not say in what Respect it is false, you touch it as gently as if you were afraid you should burn your Fingers. So I must go to Mr. *Baxter* for the Objection, and then to those who have answered it. Mr. *Baxter* allowed the

Table

Table to find Easter by the *Golden Number* and *Dominical Letter* to be a good one ; therefore if the *Rule* directs us to the same Day that the *Table* does, down tumbles Mr. *Baxter's* Objection. For it is not pretended that this is a Rule to find the true Time when Easter ought to be kept, according to the modern Discoveries in Astronomy ; but a Rule to find the Day on which Easter will be kept according to the Usage of the Church of England ; and it is a good and true Rule that truly directs you to find what you are looking for. If I am not mistaken, the present Year 1748 will explain the Objection, and furnish an Answer to it. This Year the *Golden Number* is, 1. The *Dominical*, or *Lord's-Day Letter*, being changed by the *Bissextile* Intercalation, is now *B*. And these direct us in the *Table* to April 10. But the Rule to find Easter, says, *Easter is always the first Sunday after the first Full Moon which happens next after the one-and-twentieth Day of March* : And if the *Full-Moon* happens upon a Sunday, *Easter-Day is the Sunday after*. Now you will say, if we look in the *Almanack*, the first Full Moon that happens next after March 21, is this Year on Saturday, April 2. And therefore by this Rule, *Easter-Day* should be the Sunday after that, viz. April 3. But *Easter-day* is not by the *Table* till April 10, and so it was observ'd ; therefore the Rule is false. And if we look for the *Full-Moon* in the *Almanack* all this is true : But who bid you go to the *Almanack* ? The Rule has no Relation to the *Almanack*, but to the *Calendar* ; nor does the Church of England observe *Easter* by the real Motion of the Moon in the Heavens, but by the *Paschal Cycle*, that was first invented by *Meton*, and fix'd as an Ecclesiastical Rule by the Council of *Nice* ; but doth not now exactly correspond to the real Motion of the Moon. Instead, therefore, of going to the *Almanack*, which has nothing to do with the Rule, go to the first Column of the *Calendar*, as it stands in most Common-Prayer Books, tho', from the Ignorance or Carelessness of the Printers, it has been

omitted in some Impressions, especially of *late Years*. There you find the *Golden Number 1*, opposite to *March 23*. Then, according to this Computation, there is a *New Moon*; Fourteen Days after that *inclusive*, the Moon will be *full*, viz. on *April 5*: And the *Sunday* after is *April 10, Easter-Day*, the very Day the *Table* directs us to. Because you were pleas'd to assert so *flatly* and *positively* that it was allowed to be *false*, I have tried the *Rule* with the *Table* for more than a Century, from 1660 to 1770, and it doth *not once* fail, but exactly directs to the very Day that the *Table* doth. So that I expect you will set this down under the Head of *false Facts*, for no Man can say this is a *false Rule*, but He who *doth not* or *will not* understand it. And indeed it is astonishing to me, that so bare-fac'd a Calumny should subsist so long, and be so carefully convey'd from one to another, from the Time of *Mr. Baxter* to this very Day.

When Bishop *Hoadly* gave Dr. *Calamy* this Answer, his Correspondent was not ashamed to insult the venerable Fathers of the Council of *Nice* for being *no better Astronomers*, nor was Dr. *Calamy* ashamed to publish his Letter; and our Posterity may probably have as much Reason to admire at the Ignorance of even this Age in these Matters. But at the Time of the Council of *Nice*, this *Cycle* answer'd pretty nearly to the real Motion of the Planets, and so long as the Church continues to go by this Calculation, so long the Rule will continue to be a good one. This is all that any reasonable Man can mean by finding Easter *for ever* by the *Table*. And so long as the People of this Realm continue to compute their civil Account by the *Julian Period*, I see not why the Church may not continue this *Old Rule*. But if the Legislature should alter their *civil Account*, and bring it nearer to the real Motions of the heavenly Bodies, by conforming to the new Stile of *Pope Gregory*, which has of late been much talk'd of, I make no doubt but the Church of *England* will not be backward in altering *their* Com-
puta-

putation, and bringing *that* nearer to the real Motion of the Planets, according to the best Discoveries in *Astronomy*.

The Second Thing is, the *reading of the Apocryphal Books as if they were holy Scripture*. And yet you seem to be conscious that they are not read *as Holy Scripture*; for in your Note, p. 77, you confess they are distinguished from the Holy Scripture in the *sixth* Article. But this Note is a great Way from p. 112, where this Objection is again brought forth, and made to lend its *feeble Aid*, towards furnishing a *seventh* Part of a *seventh* Reason for Lay-Separation. Here you speak more cautiously, that they are read *under the Title of Lessons, as the Holy Scriptures are*. Which is true; but they are not therefore pretended to be *Holy Scripture*. However in the Note you make amends for your Moderation in the Text. In this you say, “ the Scriptures excluded to make Room
“ for the Apocrypha, are, Part of *Leviticus, Chroni-*
“ *cles, Nehemiah, Esther, Canticles, Lamentations, Amos,*
“ *Obadiab, Jonah, Nabum, Zephaniah, Haggai, 2 Thes.*
“ *ii. and iii, John, the Revelations.*” Thus when you get hold of a *little Truth*, you wrap it up in I know not how much *Falsehood*, as if we had nothing else to do but to pick it off again: You might have said with equal Truth, that the *four Gospels* were left out too; and whenever you leave your *chief Authors*, you discover a strange Propensity this Way. Your Reader, by turning to the *Calendar* and comparing it with his Bible, may see, that no Part of *Lamentations*, nor of *Amos*, nor of *Obadiab*, nor of *Jonah*, nor of *Nabum*, nor of *Zephaniah*, nor of *Haggai*, nor of the *second Epistle to the Thessalonians*, nor of the *Gospel and the three Epistles of St. John*, I say *no Part* of these several Books now mention'd are left out: Only *three Verses* of *Esther* are left out; and of *Nehemiah*, no more than *four Chapters*, which contain little more than *Lists and Genealogies*, which would contribute but
G 2 little

little to the Edification of the People. So that this Fact seems to be *somewhat false*. See *Short Ans.* p. 20.

But with all this Outcry against the *Apocrypha*, who, that was not used to your *Inconsistency*, would expect that you yourself, no further off than p. 108. should have quoted *Ecclesiasticus* vii. 14. as *Holy Scripture*, and in the same Line with *Mat.* vi. 7. *without any Mark to distinguish them?* May not ignorant People, and the Children you are instructing, easily mistake, and from hence be led to think this Precept in *Ecclesiasticus*, is as much the sincere Word of God, as the Command of our Blessed Saviour is? I use your own Way of Reasoning in your first Question, p. 113.

I must take a little more Notice of this Note (whether it be Dr. Owen's or yours, it matters not) you say, *Tobit* iv. 10. is contrary to *1 John* i. 7. It would have swell'd the Account to have referr'd also to *Tobit* xii. 9. and *Ecclus* iii. 30. But when you are at Leisure to shew the Contrariety of this Passage to that of *St. John*, I beseech you, take care to do it in such a Manner, as not to make *Prov.* xvi. 6. *Dan.* iv. 27. *1 Pet.* iv. 8. *2 Tim.* vi. 19. inconsistent with the same Text.—You say, *Judith* ix. where the Murder of the *Sechemites* is commended, *ought not to be read*. But by whom is it commended? By *Judith*; upon whose Authority no Stress is laid. And why may not this Account be read, as well as the History of the Fact itself in *Genesis*? You then blame us for reading Chapters wherein *Judith* is guilty of a Lie,—of more Lies,—and these Lies are approved. If this be a sufficient Reason, must we not strike out of our Calendar *Gen.* xxvii. 13, 19, and *Ch.* xlii. 9, 12. *Ex.* i. 19. *1 Sam.* xi. 10. *2 Kings* vi. 19. and perhaps some other Places that might be produced? But, suppose at last *Judith* should not be guilty of a Lie, then, What will become of the Objection? Every Untruth is not a Lie. And in the Judgment of the best Moralists, particularly *Grotius* and *Puffendorf*, it is lawful in many Cases

Cases to speak false to a professed Enemy. That this is one of the Cases, will be evident from the Words of Puffendorf, Book 4. Ch. 1. Sect. 19. " This is manifest, that since the Obligation to disclose our Mind " ceases with Regard to Enemies, it cannot fall under " the Sin of Lying to give them a feigned Relation, " to terrify them with false Rumours, or any Way " to procure their Prejudice, provided, no undeserved " Loss or Damage ensue to a third Party, who is our " Friend." *Dolus an Virtus quis in Hoste requirit?* As to Wisdom, see Mr. Arnold's Comment: And something perhaps might be said for *Ecclus* xii. But I do not think myself concern'd to defend every *Passage* in the *Apocrypha*: If they were not to be read in Churches I should be well enough content. All I mean is to observe, they are not so exceptionable as you are pleas'd to represent them; that they do not deserve *all that Noise and Clamour* that is raised about them; and that the reading them is *no Reason* for Separation.

Thirdly, Your last Note or any thing therein contain'd notwithstanding, you have so great a Regard for Truth, that " if there be but one false Translation " of Scripture in the Book of Common-Prayer, it is " wrong to assent to it as true, consonant to God's " Word." This was hinted at before, *p. 25.* it is the old *Popish* Objection against having the Liturgy in *English*, " that there were manifest Errors, and false " Translations, which all be Depravation of God's " Scripture, and so *vere Mendacia*: Now if the Service be so fram'd, then may Men well say upon us, " that we serve God with Lies." One would think Dr. Cole were a modern *Dissenter*.* But tho' you are willing to borrow an Arrow out of any Quiver to shoot at us, it is easier to say this, than to prove it: Let us see how you support this Charge of *false Translations*? You say, " The Translation of *Psalm* cv. 28. " either in the Common-Prayer, or in the Bible must

* See Burnet's Hist. Reform. Vol. II. p. 343.

“ be wrong, for in one it is, *they rebelled not*, in the
 “ other, *they were not obedient* ;” the like Remark
 you say, is applicable to *Psalms* lviii. 8. *Pf.* cxxxiii. 3.
 So because *one* Translation must be wrong, therefore
that in the Common-Prayer-Book certainly is: A very
 pretty Consequence, but not *altogether conclusive*. It
 will be still less so to any Reader that will consider
 what the learned Mr. *Johnson* has said upon this Pas-
 sage.* As to the second Text, the *old* Translation is
 likewise very defensible, as *good*, at least, if not *prefer-
 able* to the last. And as to the third, it doth not
materially differ from the last Translation; in which
 the Translators, without changing the Sense, have
 supplied a few Words that seemed wanting, as well in
 the *Hebrew* as in the former Translation, only to prevent
 any Mistake, as if the same individual Particles of
 Dew which fell upon *Hermon*, should be supposed also
 to fall upon Mount *Sion*, which was at a Distance from
Hermon. But, possibly, the learned Bishop *Hare*’s
 Conjecture may be right; who supposes *Sion* to be
 mistaken here for *Sirion*; and if so, what the last
 Translators have supplied to clear the Meaning of the
 Text was unnecessary: For *Sirion* was a Part of *Anti-
 Libanus*, and so near to *Hermon*, that the Dew of
Hermon may very well be said to fall upon it, agreeable
 to the literal reading of the *old* Translation. Upon
 the whole, I wonder you should be so much set against
 this Translation, since *two* of the *three* Persons who
 were principally concern’d in making it, were *Rogers*
 and Bishop *Coverdale*; and these are two of those
 Persons, whom you challeng’d for *Dissenters*.

The *Fourth* is “ the Injunction to reject from the
 “ Communion all who are not confirmed, or who
 “ desire not Episcopal Confirmation.” As to this you
 say, “ As Confirmation in the establish’d Church is a
 “ mere transient Ceremony, answering no good End,
 “ as we know of, but, on the contrary, rather ap-
 “ pearing like a *solemn Mockery*, leading People to

* See *Johnson’s* Notes in Defence of the *Old* Translation.

“ believe they have receiv’d some peculiar Grace,
 “ when they have obtained nothing, tending chiefly
 “ to beget in weak Minds, an undue Veneration for
 “ Episcopal Powers,——such a Rite cannot be a ne-
 “ cessary Qualification for participating of the *Lord’s*
 “ *Supper*, and therefore the requiring it *as such*, cannot
 “ *be agreeable to God’s Word.*” I shall take no Notice
 of the Ribaldry you throw out on this Occasion, but
 only observe, by *your own* Account of it, it is so far
 from being required as a necessary Qualification for
 the Lord’s Supper, that the *bare Desire* of having it,
 is deem’d sufficient. If your Reader turns to the
 Office, he will see it said in the Exhortation, that *the*
Order about Confirmation is very convenient to be ob-
served, to the End that Children being now come to the
Years of Discretion, and having learned what their God-
fathers and Godmothers promised for them in Baptism,
they may themselves with their own Mouth and Consent,
openly before the Church, ratify and confirm the same.
 This then being one great End of Confirmation; Will
 you say that any young Person can be properly qualified
 to receive the Lord’s Supper, who is not ready and
 desirous, at least, of ratifying and confirming his Bap-
 tismal Covenant ?

That we may lay all your Objections to our Liturgy
 together, we must now go to p. 105, where you give
 us a *Seventh* Reason for Lay-Separation, under the
 Head of “ Several Superstitious and some dangerous
 “ Conformities *required*, or, rational and uncorrupt
 “ Worship desirable.”

This Reason is composed of *seven* Particulars, which
 are the *Shreds and Chips* of the Dissenters Objections;
 or if you will, they may be consider’d as made out of
 the *Sweepings of your Study*. And truly some are so
 cover’d with Dust that you seem not to know them
 again, and forget that you have mention’d them *once*
or twice before. The Reader may judge how low
 you were reduc’d, by running over the Particulars.

The First is, *Bowing to the Name of Jesus*; this
 tho’

tho' it is *not*, it seems, it "*looks like a superstitious and even Idolatrous Practice,*" and yet is required by Canon 18.

I expect that some of your Brethren of the separating Divines will reprove you, for saying it looks like an *Idolatrous* or even a *Superstitious Practice* to worship *Jesus Christ* upon any Occasion: And therefore, only observing that you descant most impertinently and ridiculously indeed upon *Phil. ii. 9.* I will recite so much of the Canon as relates to this; and if the Reader will compare it with your Objections; it may be left to shift for itself.

———"All manner of Persons then present; shall
 "reverently *Kneel* upon their *Knees* when the general
 "Confession, Litany and other Prayers are read; and
 "shall *stand up* at the saying of the Belief, according
 "to the Rules in that Behalf prescribed in the Book
 "of Common-Prayer. And likewise when in Time
 "of Divine Service the *Lord Jesus* shall be mention'd,
 "due and lowly *Reverence* shall be done by all Persons
 "present, as it hath been accustomed; testifying by
 "these outward Ceremonies and Gestures, their in-
 "ward Humility, Christian Resolution, and due Ac-
 "knowledgment that the *Lord Jesus Christ*, the true
 "eternal Son of God, is the only Saviour of the
 "World; in whom alone all the Mercies, Graces and
 "Promises of God to Mankind, for this Life and the
 "Life to come, are fully and wholly comprized."

It is a common Artifice with *You*, to cry out at every Turn, such a Practice is *Superstitious*, tho' it be never so grave; decent; and proper: But I never saw any of you observe to your People this plain Truth, that there is as much *Superstition* in scrupulously avoiding an innocent and harmless Usage, as there is in expecting some unreasonable Consequence to attend the Practice of it. For Instance, If a Person scrupulously refuses to join in the publick Prayers, because the officiating Minister is cloath'd in *White* and not in *Black*; or, because he reads the Prayers and doth not repeat them by Heart;

or, fly from a Church, because, 200 Years ago, Mass was said in it; or the like; such a Person is as truly *Superstitious*, as he who expects some great Evil shall befall him, because he has *spilt the Salt*, or *heard an Owl scream*. And it would be of considerable Use to your People, if they would consider, that *one sort of Superstition* consists in a *superstitious Avoidance of it*. You confess, p. 161, *there are many, too many, enthusiastical People among the Dissenters*; this indeed is evident enough; we may discover it by most, even of their *modern Performances*, from the *Colonel's Memoirs* down to *Toms's Shining Convert*; and this you may depend on, whenever you meet with *Enthusiasm*, *Superstition* is not far behind.

But I cannot conceive why any fair and candid Adversary should introduce the *Popish Doctors Pleas* upon this Head, as you do in your Note, p. 107. For the *Protestant Church of England* can have no Concern with *these*: And yet you are not dispos'd to *widen the Breach and cherish Animosities*, no, not you! As to this Matter the Truth is, it is a Thing of *small Moment* in itself, but since there are Men who are for debasing and depreciating the Person of our *Blessed Saviour*, and are *jealous of*, and *angry at*, every Act of Adoration that is given him, as the Second Person in the ever blessed and adorable Trinity; it is extremely proper to continue this Custom, and bear a little hard on the contrary Side, just as People do, (to borrow Mr. *Raf-trick's* Allusion) when a Boat is in Danger of over-setting.

The *Second Objection*, is to the Repetitions in the Liturgy. See *Sh. Ans.* p. 28.

The *Third Peccadillo*, is *Church-Musick*. This is urg'd, p. 108, as a *seventh Part of one Reason* for separating from the Church of *England*. And if a Stranger were to read what you say upon it, he might think the Service was *chaunted* in every Parish-Church in *England*. But you know this is not used in our *Parish-Churches*, consequently this Objection could

make *no Part* of a Reason for *Separating* from *them*. Even *Organs* are used in very *few* Churches, comparatively speaking, nor are they *enjoin'd* to be used in *any* : If the Congregation do not like them, they may discharge their *Organist*, and the Instrument will not disturb them. But if you were in *Holland*, Sir, would you dare to urge this as a Reason for separating from the *Presbyterian* Establishment of *Mynbeers* the Dutch ? Yet I have been credibly inform'd that they use *Organs* in their Churches, as much, or more than the Church of *England* does.

But before we dismiss this *curious* Objection, give me leave to observe, that the *whining Tone* which was so peculiar to the Assemblies of the *Separatists*, especially if it be highly finish'd, with an edifying *Twang* through the Nose, is liable to every Objection that even *Cathedral-Musick* is ; And aggravated, moreover, with this unsurmountable Exception, that it is most *shocking*ly and offensively *Unmusical*. I expect you will say, that this is now pretty much laid aside ; it may be so in the *more polish'd* Meetings, and where the *most sensible* Teachers preside, but we know, in the *Rural* Meetings, a great Part of that *extraordinary Edification* so much boasted of, consists in the supposed Efficacy of *this Gift* ; how much soever the Teachers themselves, especially when they are away from their Flock, will confess themselves ashamed of it.

But not to insist longer on this ; The Answer to your Objection is, that what you object to, is used only in a *few* Places of Worship ; very few, besides the Cathedrals ; and I think, in *none* of our Parish-Churches properly so called. And therefore it cannot be a Reason for *Separation*, because none of our Communion, are *oblig'd* involuntarily to comply with it.

The *Fourth* Objection is to the *Church-Holidays*. And whereas before, *p. 47.* we had not Fasts enough ; now, it seems, *p. 111.* we have *too many*. See *Short Answer*, *p. 21, &c.*

The *Fifth* Objection is to *Church-Gestures*. And to shew how low your Stock of Objections is reduc'd, and that you are come to the very *Dregs* and *Lees* of them, all you can think of, after racking your Invention, is this, 'That it is *unreasonable and indecent to stand up at the Gospel, and sit down at the Epistle*. This, you say, is a *trifling Distinction* : I may truly say, it is a *trifling Objection* ; and indeed, not well founded neither ; for the People are *not enjoin'd to sit down at the Epistle*, they may *stand* if they please. But whether they have their Liberty or are restrained in any Point, you will be dissatisfied, and who can help it ? For it is impossible to please those who are resolv'd to be out of Humour. The Reason given by Mr. *Wheatly* for standing up at the Gospel seems to me sufficient. He says, " In *St. Austin's* Time, the People always stood " when the Lessons were read, to shew their Reverence to God's Holy Word : But afterwards, when " this was thought too great a Burden, they were " allow'd to sit down at the Lessons, and were only " obliged to stand at the reading of the Gospel, which " always contains something that our Lord did, spake, " or suffer'd in his own Person. By which Gesture " they shew'd they had a greater Respect to the Son of " God *himself*, than they had to any other inspired " Person, tho' speaking the Word of God, and by " God's Authority." Yet I should not be surpris'd if for *this* Reason you should dislike it the more.

The *Sixth* Objection is to the *Apocrypha* ; and this we have had before. See p. 51.

Lastly, that you may go off with a *Flash*, you have reserv'd for the *seventh*, some dangerous Prayers and Customs, to bring up the Rear. Well, out with them ; What are these ? Why, *The Litany* has a Tendency to lead Men into a Belief of three Gods ; and the *Burial-Office* pronounces, as you pretend, some Persons happy, that you think are not so. Is this all ? These are both itale Objections, we had them before. See p. 47 and 44.

Next comes a Custom *very* liable to Censure, that of *bowing towards the East*. For ought appears, you leave your Reader to think this an *universal* Practice; whereas there are as many, perhaps, that *do not*, as there are that *do* it. You gravely ask, tho', I think, you must be in Jest, "Is there any Deity residing Eastward, who is not equally in the West?" And again, "Do these Easterly Worshipers bow down to something or nothing?" And the Question, it seems, (to make your *Pupil* think it look'd like *Idolatry*) is so difficult, that you leave it to the *Adorers themselves to answer*, tho' all the while you very well know they *adore* nothing but *God*. But as this Action is not sinful in itself, I see not under what Pretence, the *Separatists* can upon your Principles object this to the Church of *England*. For the Church no where *enjoins* it, that I know of; but every Man is left to his Liberty; He does it, or not, just as he likes. And if I understand you, unless *you* had the Direction of them, you would have *all* Things left *undetermin'd*. But nothing can please, that any Members of the Church of *England* do, tho' the Church is no Way concern'd with it; nor do I know of any living Member of our Church, either of the Clergy or Laity, that thinks it of Consequence enough either to encourage or prevent this Practice.

You had much such another Stroke, *p. 67*, where you declaim against *railing in the Communion-Table*; a Thing that is no where *prescribed*, and is done for no other Reason, but for the Convenience and Decency of it; of which you would yourself be sensible, if you were to leave your own *irreverent* Way, and had to distribute the Elements, after *our decent* Manner, to a large Number of Communicants. And as you are pleas'd to claim so much Liberty for *yourself* and *your* People, (except as before excepted) I beseech you to indulge us so far as to let *us* enjoy a little too.

In this 115th Page you begin to wind up your Bottom, and your Reader has good Reason to expect,

as well as to *wish*, from your last Collection of Reasons, that you had done. But he is mistaken, you cannot leave this same Liturgy so; and if we turn to p. 157, there we may find *another* Parcel; as they may seem; but upon looking into them, they are such as we *have had before*; or such as are mention'd in the *plain Reasons*; or such as are so trifling and insignificant that they *require* no Answer, or *deserve* none. But one Passage is remarkable enough; as Instances of *private Opinions and Party-Passions*, you mention the Doctrine of *Regeneration in Baptism*, and of the *Trinity*; the *Imposition* of the Bishop's Hands in Confirmation, to *certify them by this Sign, of God's Favour and Goodness*.—And last of all “that King *Charles* was a Martyr, and his Blood innocent.” Here, not to insist that the Offices for the *State Days*, are not in *Strictness* to be consider'd as a Part of the Liturgy; I shall observe; that by inserting this, you do *inadvertently*, but *plainly* discover yourself. In your curious History, p. 13, 14, you would *make the Child believe*, that the *Presbyterians* had no Hand in the Murder of King *Charles I.* nor indeed *any* of the *Dissenters*: It was a *Parliament full of Churchmen*—where there was but One *Presbyterian* when the War begun: But it was so far from being an *Act of the Presbyterians*, that they *protested against it and opposed it*,—when the *Episcopal Party*, who—had not a little contributed towards it, wanted either *Courage or Honesty* to do the like. In short, the *Beheading* (or as we call it, the murdering) the King, was the *Act of a wicked Faction in the Army*, influenc'd by *Papish Councils*, and manag'd by *OLIVER CROMWELL*; who not being that one *Presbyterian* that was in Parliament when the War begun, is, I suppose, *pro hac vice*, and 'till this Jobb be perform'd, to be consider'd as a *Church-Man*.* We are sensible what
great

* Your Account of that Fact is much of the same Kind with the late *modest* Representations of the last detestable Rebellion; one Gentleman begs Leave “to observe, that in one Part of “this Kingdom, those who profess themselves to be of our
Church,

great Obligations we have to you, Sir, for so candid and impartial a Representation of this execrable Fact, so far as *we* are concern'd. And if you please, we will even *suppose* that the *Dissenters* did really oppose and abhor that unparallel'd Murder, *i. e.* We are willing to have what they did forgotten as much as possible; and we shall be fully satisfied, if they will *forbear* to put in Practice any such Principles as were at that Time professed by *the common Enemies of our Church and State*: And for my own Part, I will not so much as enquire what Religion that *Scots Army* was of, which for 400,000 *l.* betray'd and deliver'd the King

“ Church, as to its external Polity and Ceremonies,—have risen
 “ in an impious Rebellion against his present Majesty, and join'd
 “ with *Spaniards, French, Italians, and home-bred Papists*, in
 “ their wicked Attempts to subvert the Protestant Religion and
 “ Liberties.” * Who wou'd not think, that almost *that* whole Kingdom was conquer'd without any considerable Assistance from the Members of the Kirk of Scotland? And yet it is certain, 1. That the *Episcopal Dissenters* in that Kingdom are often represented comparatively as a Handful of Men, and an inconsiderable Number. 2. That the foreign Assistance of *Men* was very trifling and small. 3. That out of the Five convicted Rebel-Chiefs, the two *Earls, Kilmarnock and Cromarty*, were professed *Kirk-Men*; the Lord *Lovat* and Mr. *Radcliff* were professed *Papists*, and Lord *Balmerino* did not declare himself of any Religion, but most probably was a *Papist*; so that none of these Leaders were professed Members of our Church; and it is no irrational Way of judging of the Generality of any Faction, by the Principles of their *chief Leaders*. Yet I will not deny but there were several professed Members of our Church unhappily concern'd in that unnatural Insurrection. And if We agree with Mr. *Foster* that it would be unjust to infer from the Instance of Lord *Kilmarnock*, that the Principles of that Church encourage or have the least Tendency to Sedition; the Dissenters should be equally ingenious and candid in respect of Us. And tho' I do not know how just Mr. *Foster's* Censure is upon the Dissenters from the Establishment in Scotland, because I am but little acquainted with them; I will venture to say the same of the Dissenters in South Britain, viz. “ They are a Stain and Dishonour both to the English and Scots Churches, and their Principles are disavowed by both” †.

* See the Dissenting Gentleman's second Letter to Mr. *White*.

† Mr. *Foster's* Account of the Behaviour of the E. of *Kilmarnock*. Mr. *White's* Second Defence.

up. But at last it comes out, p. 158, that you will not be contented with this, unless we will forbear to condemn that *Murder*, and forgetting how loyal you have pretended yourself to be, you object it to us as a Crime, that in the Office for Jan. 30. King Charles is call'd a *Martyr*, and *his Blood* said to be *Innocent*.

As to the *Sixth* Reason for Lay-Separation (the only one, I think, that has not been remark'd upon) it sets out ill, with a false Representation of the Communion-Office; and what follows is such a Heap of Ribaldry and Abuse, that I have neither Leisure nor Inclination particularly to speak to it. *But see Short Answer, p. 62.*

However, before I take my Leave, I must not forget to remind you of one grand Fault which is utterly unjustifiable; and that is, every now and then quoting some Writers of our Church whose *Names* carry an *Authority* with them, and by *falsely* or *partially* representing their Words or Sentiments, you endeavour to make them become Accessaries to the Continuation of the *Schism*, and to *countenance a Crime which their Souls abhorr'd*. I think it an Act of Piety to rescue the Memory of these worthy Men from such dangerous Treatment, and hope you will have so much Ingenuity as to acknowledge in this respect you have done wrong.

The first I shall mention is a Quotation from Dr. Lucas's Inquiry after Happiness, in the Note, p. 117. Dr. Lucas, in the Place referr'd to, is speaking of the Mistakes about Christian Liberty, which some *falsely* placed in an Immunity from external Rites and Observances. And, " 'Tis true, *says he*, the Mosaick Institution as far as it consisted in outward Observances and Typical Rites is now dissolved.—But what is this to Ecclesiastical Authority? Or to those Ecclesiastical Institutions which are no Part of the Mosaick Yoke? From the Abrogation, indeed, or Abolition of Ritual and Typical Religion one may infer; First, that Christianity must be a rational Worship, of moral, spiritual Service. And there-
fore

“ fore, Secondly, That human Institutions, when they
 “ enjoin any thing as a necessary and essential Part of Re-
 “ ligion which God has not made so ; or, when they im-
 “ pose such Rites, as through the Number or Nature of
 “ them, cherish Superstition, obscure the Gospel, weaken
 “ its force, or prove burthensome to us, are to be rejected,
 “ and not complied with. Thus much is plain, and no-
 “ thing further. There have been others who run
 “ into more intolerable Errors ; for some have placed
 “ Christian Liberty in Exemption from the Laws of
 “ Man.” You quote only the Words in *Italicks*, but
 when the whole is taken together, with the Scope
 and Design of the Author in the Place where it
 stands in his Book, this Passage will be so far from
 excusing your Nonconformity, that it will be plain,
 Dr. Lucas is here arguing in favour of the Rites
 and Ceremonies of our Church. And therefore it was
 not quite fair to urge his Authority as if he was *against*
 them. Indeed, the Quotation, even as you represent
 it, can do your Cause no Service : for if our Church
 enjoins no human Institution as a necessary and essential
 Part of Religion ; and if our Rites and Ceremonies are
 such as neither from the Number or Nature of them
 do cherish Superstition, or obscure the Gospel, or weaken
 its force, or prove Burthensome, all which is certainly
 true, then it is plain according to this very Quotation,
 they ought to be complied with. And so far as Dr.
 Lucas’s Authority may be of any Weight in this
 Matter, your Reader may in a great Measure judge of
 his Sentiments by what he says, Vol. I. p. 74. “ Had
 “ Men worthy Notions of God, how were it possible
 “ they should ever fancy, that God would accept of
 “ the Sincerity and Devotion of a Communicant
 “ sitting, but not kneeling ? After Supper, but not in
 “ the Morning ? That the Whiteness of the Garment
 “ would pollute and unhallow the spiritual Sacrifice
 “ of Prayer and Praises ? and such like.” P. 135.
 and 142. you quote several Passages from Bishop
 Stillingfleet’s *Irenicum* ; but very incoherently, you are
 far

far from observing any proper Connection, and do it so immethodically, that if we were to take the same Liberty we might make a Man countenance what we would. The first Passage is to be found, p. 117 of the *Irenicum*, but not exactly as you quote it. The Second may be found, p. 116, and the next, p. 119. And then come two Quotations from different Parts of the Preface. *That Book* you Separatists are extremely fond of, and seem to take Pleasure in insulting the Memory of so considerable a Man, by taking Advantages of this his *Juvenile* Performance. The *Plain Reasoner*, and others have done so before you; and as few Men were more able to answer for themselves than Bishop *Stillingfleet*, I will not presume to make any other Defence for him, than what he himself did. It seems some of the Separatists were pleased to quarrel with this their *favourite Author* for a *Sermon* of his; and in some of their Writings, they produced some Passages of *this very Book*, which *they pretended* were contradictory to some Things which he advanc'd in his *Sermon*.

This Treatment occasion'd his *Unreasonableness* of Separation, so that the Church is obliged to her Enemies for that Book, for it is a Defence of that Sermon: And in the Preface to this Book the good Bishop answers, That when he wrote his *Irenicum*, " he was very
 " young; and therefore it ought not to be wonder'd
 " at, if in twenty Year's Time his Judgment was
 " alter'd as to some Things. But, he says, *as to the*
 " *Unlawfulness* of Separation he speaks as fully in
 " *that very Book*, as he did afterwards in his *Sermon*,
 " *which will appear by these Particulars in it.*"

" 1. It is unlawful [for Men] to set up new
 " Churches, because they cannot conform to such
 " Practices as they suspect to be unlawful.

" 2. Those are new Churches, when Men erect
 " distinct Societies for Worship, under distinct and
 " peculiar Officers, governing by Laws and Church-
 " Rules, different from that Form they separate from.

“ 3. As to Things in the Judgment of the primitive and reformed Churches left undetermined by the Law of God, and in Matters of meer Order and Decency, and wholly as to the Form of Government, every one, notwithstanding what his private Judgment may be of them, is bound, for the Peace of the Church of God, to submit to the Determination of the lawful Governors of the Church.

“ *Allow, says he, but these three Conclusions, and defend the present Separation if you can. Why then do you make such a Stir about other Passages in that Book, and take so little Notice,*” [you and the Plain Reasoner take no Notice,] “ *of these, which are most pertinent and material.*”

This is the Substance of the *Bishop's own Defence*, and an ingenuous Person would not produce an Authority from that Book, in *this* Dispute, without taking Notice of what *the Author* had said of it. The last Passage you quote is what you are most fond of, viz. *Let Men turn and wind themselves which Way they will, by the very same Arguments that any will prove Separation from the Church of Rome lawful, because she requireth unlawful Things, as Conditions of her Communion; it will be proved lawful, not to conform to any suspected, or unlawful Practice, required by any Church Governors upon the same Terms, if the Thing so required, be after serious and sober Enquiry, judged unwarrantable by a Man's own Conscience.* See Sh. Anf. P. 71.

As these Words may carry an Insinuation as if the Bishop meant it was a parallel Case between the Separation of the *Dissenters from us*, and *our* Separation from the Church of *Rome*; I must observe that of all the unfair Methods which *your* Writers make use of, there is no one hath a greater Effect, nor is any thing they say further from Truth than this. You yourself do frequently insinuate, that the Church of *England*, the main Bulwark of the Reformation, is but one
Remove

Remove from *Popery*; and that it is altogether as lawful, and as justifiable for *you* to separate from *us*, as it is for *us* to separate from the Church of *Rome*. In Answer to which, as you think proper to produce Bishop *Stillingfleet's* Authority *against* us, give me Leave to use it to justify that Church now he is dead, of which he was both the Defence and Ornament when living.

He says, " The only remaining Pretence for the present Separation, is, that there is a Parity of Reason as to their separating from Us, and our separating from the Church of *Rome*,—but is it possible for any Man that pretends to be a *Protestant Divine* to think the Case alike? When, 1. *They* [the Dissenters] confess our Doctrine in the 39 Articles to be true.

" *We* reject all their [the Church of *Rome's*] additional Articles in *Pius* the Fourth his Creed, not only as false, but some of them as absurd, and unreasonable as Men can invent, viz. That of *Transubstantiation*, which is made by them the great trying, and burning Point. But what is there that the most inveterate Enemies of *our* Church, can charge in her *Doctrine*, as new, as false, as absurd? Nay, they all yeild to the Antiquity, to the Truth, to the Reasonableness of *our Doctrine*, and is not Mr. B—— ashamed to make the Case seem parallel?

2. " We charge them [the Church of *Rome*] with those Reasons for Separation which the Scripture allows, such as *Idolatry*, *perverting the Gospel* and *Institutions of Christ*, and *Tyranny* over the *Consciences* of Men, in making those things necessary to *Salvation* which Christ never made so.

" But not one of them can with any Appearance of Reason be charged on the Church of *England* since we profess to give religious Worship *only* to God, We worship no *Images*, We invoke no

“ *Saints*. We adore no *Host*. We creep to no *Crucifix*. We kiss no *Relicks*. We equal no *Traditions* with the Gospel. We lock it not up from the People in an unknown Tongue. We preach no other Terms of Salvation than Christ and his Apostles did. We set up no *Monarchy* in the Church to undermine *Christ’s*, nor *dispense* with his Laws and Institutions. We mangle no Sacraments, nor pretend to know what makes more for the Honour of his Blood, than he himself did. We pretend to no Skill in expiating Men’s Sins when they are dead ; nor in turning the bottomless Pit into the Pains of *Purgatory*, by a charm of Words, and a quick Turn of the Hand. We do not cheat Men’s Souls with false Bills of Exchange, call’d *Indulgences* ; nor give out, that we have the Treasure of the Church in *our* keeping, which we can apply as we see Occasion. We use no *pious Frauds* to delude the People ; nor pretend to be infallible as they do, when they have a Mind to deceive. These are Things which the Divines of *our* Church, have with great Clearness and Strength of Reason made good against the Church of *Rome* ; and since they cannot be objected against *our* Church, with what Face can Men suppose the Cases of those who separate from each of them to be parallel ?

3. “ As to the Ceremonies in the *Roman* Church, and Ours, there are these considerable Differences.”;

1. “ They have a *mighty Number*, as appears by their Rituals and Ceremonials, and the great Volumes written in Explication of them : We *very few* ; and those so very easy and plain, that it requires as great Skill, *not* to understand *ours*, as it doth to understand *theirs*.

2. “ They place great *Holiness* in *theirs*, as appears by the Forms of Consecration of their Water, Oil, Salt, Wax, Vestments, &c. : But We allow none
 “ of

“ of these, but only the Use of certain Ceremonies,
 “ without any preceding Act of the Church importing
 “ any peculiar *Holiness* attributed to them.*

3. “ They suppose great Virtue and Efficacy to be
 “ in them for the purging away *some* Sort of *Sins* ;
 “ We utterly deny any such Thing to belong to *our*
 “ Ceremonies, but declare they are appointed only for
 “ *Order and Decency*.

4. “ They make their Ceremonials, being appointed
 “ by the Church, to become *necessary* Parts of divine
 “ Worship : But our Church looks upon them, even
 “ *when determin’d*, as things in their own Nature *in-*
 “ *different*, but only required by that general Obe-
 “ dience which we owe to *lawful Authority* ; so that
 “ as to Ceremonials themselves, there is a vast Dispa-

* As what the learned Bishop here says, is strictly true, it will effectually answer and destroy all those false and malicious Calumnies that are interspersed in several Parts of your Book, where you charge us with imputing an unwarrantable Holiness to our Churches, Vestments, &c. As these Insinuations are highly injurious, so are they altogether groundless and unprovoked. Our Vestments and Utensils, have no particular previous Consecration ; and in the Consecration of our Churches and Church-Yards, there is nothing that can be pretended to be superstitious. If there were, we should, most probably, find it in the Form of Consecration of a Chapel in *Hampshire*, by Bishop *Andrews* ; the same Person, I presume, whom you dignify, by calling him a *superstitious* Bishop, p. 107. This Form is placed at the End of Bishop *Sparrow’s* Collection of Articles, &c. And, I am perswaded, it would give the most timorous Dissenter no Offence. Even after their Consecration, all Men know, that our Churches and Church-Yards are no otherwise deemed to be Holy, than as they are Places set apart from common Uses, and purposely separated and appropriated, for the publick Worship of Almighty God, and for the Burial of the Dead. Therefore, when we meet with any malicious Sneers, either in dissenting, or unbelieving Writers, concerning Holy Walls, and Holy Ground, we should consider them only as Proofs of the Author’s Disingenuity and Malevolence, If you had had less of this, you would not have asked, p. 46. “ Is there any Holiness in a “ *White Surplice* ?” Who ever pretended there was more Holiness in a *white Surplice*, than in a *White Band* ? Or, in a *Black Gown*, more than in a *Black Cloak* ? Yet you would not *widen the Breach* ; you have no *Acrimony*, no *Inclination to irritate*, &c.

“ rity between the *Roman* Church and Ours ; and no
 “ Man can pretend otherwise that is not either grossly
 “ ignorant, or doth not wilfully misunderstand the
 “ State of the Controversy between *them* and *us* *”.

You see then, that Bishop *Stillingfleet*’s Authority will bring but small Advantage to your Cause. On the contrary I return you my Thanks, for giving me so fair an Occasion to produce this material Passage, and at the same time to recommend this Book, *The Unreasonableness of Separation*, &c, to the serious Perusal of every fair and *sincere* Dissenter.

Your Quotation from Mr. *Hales*’s Tract of Schism, is far from being exact; but not to insist upon this, (I would not stand with you upon Trifles) be pleas’d to consider the following Place in that very Piece.
 “ For the further opening therefore of the Nature of
 “ Schism, something must be added by way of Difference to distinguish it from *necessary Separation* ; and
 “ that is, *says he*, that the Causes upon which Division is attempted, proceed not from *Passion* or *Dis-*
 “ *temper*, or from *Ambition* or *Avarice*, or such other
 “ Ends as human Folly is apt to pursue, but from
 “ well weigh’d and *necessary Reasons*, and *that* when
 “ all other means having been tried *nothing* will serve
 “ to *save us from Guilt of Conscience*, but *open Separation*.” This last is the Case between us and the Church of *Rome* ; and I leave any By-Stander to judge whether the former is not the Case between you and Us.

For the Quotation from Bishop *Burnet*. See *Short Ans.* p. 17, &c.

P. 151, you say, Note x, Dr. *Outram* states the Meaning of the Ceremony of “ Laying on of Hands” to be, either the entire Devotion of Persons or
 “ Things to the especial Service of God, or, in the
 “ Case of some Sacrifices, the substituting the Death
 “ or Blood of the Beast in the Stead of that of the
 “ Offerer, *Lev. i. 4. Numb. viii. 10, 13. The Chil-*

* See *Stillingfleet*’s *Unreasonableness of Separat.* Part 3. S. 38

“ *dren*

"dren of Israel shall put their Hands upon the Levites.
 "De Sacrif. l. i. c. 15." Dr. Ostram's Words are,
 Sect. VIII. p. 166. "Jam manuum Impositio ritus
 "erat, ea notandi ac designandi, quæ, vel morti de-
 "vota erant, vel Dei Gratiæ commendata, vel deni-
 "que gravi alicui muneri, usuive sacro destinata."
*Imposition of Hands was a Rite, by which Men appointed
 and distinguished those Things that were either devoted to
 Death, or recommended to the Favour of God, or destin'd
 to some solemn Office, or sacred Use.* He mentions the
Blasphemer, Lev. xxiv. 14. as an Instance of the *first*
Sort; Jacob's blessing Ephraim and Manasses, as an
 Instance of the *second, Gen. xlviii. 14, &c.* *Moses con-*
ferring the Magistracy on Joshua by this Rite, as an
 Instance of the *third,* and the *Scape Goat, Lev. xvi. 21.*
 as another Instance: And what is all this to the Pur-
 pose of *Ordination in the Christian Church?* If this
 will prove that *Senior-Pastors* may ordain *Presbyters*
without the Concurrence of a Bishop, which was the
 Thing you were to make out, I am mistaken. And,
 by the Way, this Method of quoting is not justifiable.

P. 160, Your Quotation from *Dean Prideaux* is as
 little pertinent as any of the rest. No Man will deny
 but if our Liturgy were *never* to be alter'd, it might,
in time, become unintelligible to the *common People.*
 But can you say this is already the Case? Does not
 every one know that our Liturgy may easily be un-
 derstood by any of the *very lowest People?*

P. 164, You say our Argument against occasional
 Conformity may be turned against us, thus, "occa-
 "sional Communion with Dissenters is lawful, (as it
 "certainly is) therefore stated Communion with them
 "is a Duty." But, good Sir, you entirely mistake the
 Matter. How could you conceive that occasional
 Communion with the *Separatists* should be *lawful?*
 But not to nip this lovely Argument in the Bud, let
 us for the present suppose, *what I can upon no Account*
allow, your Consequence will not follow. Perhaps
 indeed, upon this Supposition it might, *if it were*

enjoined by the proper Governors of the Church and the Laws of the Land. But here lies the Difference ; you separate from the lawful Establishment for Matters *indifferent in themselves.* By the *legal Establishment* I mean, that which is fixed by those who are *the proper Rulers of the Church, with the Concurrence of the Civil Power.* A Separation from a Church *thus establish'd* can be justified upon no other Principle than *this only,* that *unlawful and sinful* Terms of Communion are required by it. Now, we say, if this be the Case, if such *unlawful and sinful* Terms be required, then *occasional Communion* with us is utterly *unlawful and sinful:* But if this be *not* the Case, then *Nonconformity* is *Schismatical,* and utterly *unjustifiable:* Therefore, *stated* Conformity and *constant* Communion with us is a *Duty.* Try your Strength now, and see if this Argument can be retorted upon us.

Whatever you can say or invent to the contrary, I will defy you to clear this Practice from the grossest *Hypocrisy,* For do you not all know, the Design of the *Test-Act* was to exclude such as are not *real Members* of the Establish'd Church ? And is it not then *gross Hypocrisy* to pretend to *be so,* by joining in the most solemn Act of Religious Worship ? An Act that furnishes you with part of your pretended Reasons against Conformity ; when all the time you know, you are intruding into a Place which the *Test-Act* intended to *exclude you from,* and that by demurely *affecting to be* what your Conscience must tell you, *you are not ?* But why should I trouble myself to argue any further with a Person who is possess'd of such consummate Effrontery, that he can prevail with himself *when he is instructing a Child,* to say it is a parallel Case between the *Separating Occasional Conformist,* and the Case of our *Blessed Saviour.* An Assertion which, besides the Absurdity, and Ridiculousness of it, falls very little, if any thing short of *Blasphemy !*

Upon the whole, it cannot be expected that in this Pamphlet I can answer every Article in your Book,
which

which is pretty closely printed, and three times as long as this is, and which contains scarce *one Answer* but what is exceptionable; so for the present I desire you would excuse me. As to *these Remarks*, I think you will not be offended at the Freedom that I have used in them, whoever you be, when you reflect that you have yourself observ'd no Rules of Decency in regard to the *Church*, and the *Clergy of England*. Candid and serious Reasoning will always be treated by Us with all imaginable Respect; but virulent Abuse, and railing Invectives, like yours, deserve more Contempt, and a severer Correction than I have given them.

One Thing more I will say, and that is, if an intelligent Reader will only change the *No's* into *Yes's*, and the Affirmative, into Negative Answers, he will find them come *infinitely nearer the Truth*. Indeed your Method of Reasoning is so oddly contrived, that with a small Alteration, what you say would serve the quite contrary Purpose, that you intended it should. I will explain my Meaning by giving a Specimen of one short Section, p. 171. under the Head of *Civil and Ecclesiastical Authority*.

Q. "Can the Command of a Magistrate or Bishop make it a Duty, or lawful, to bring That into God's Worship which was not a Duty or lawful before?"

A. *Yes, certainly: For when God has left the particular Modes and Circumstances of Worship undetermined, these are Matters indifferent, and therefore the proper Subject of the Bishop's Command.*

Q. "Is not Christ a perfect and sufficient Teacher of Religion?"

A. *Yes.*

Q. "But could He be so, if He had not, Himself, or by his Spirit in the Apostles, informed Men of every Part of necessary, useful and acceptable Worship?"

A. *Yes: If by every Part, &c. be meant, every Circumstance and Ceremony relating to Worship; for the dif-*

ferent Customs of different Countries made it proper to leave them undetermined.

Q. “ What Reflection then does the adding of
“ Man’s Inventions to God’s Worship carry in it ? ”

A. *None at all: For they are in some Respects absolutely necessary.*

Q. “ Has the Magistrate or the Priest any Power
“ to bless the Rites and Ceremonies they claim Authority to impose ? ”

A. *They have a Power to prescribe the Use of them, which is all that they claim.*

Q. “ Is there any Reason to hope that God will
“ bless them ? ”

A. *Yes, since they are done in Obedience to the lawful Authority which he has appointed.*

Q. “ Will [not] the Souls of Men be benefited
“ by any thing which is done in Obedience to a lawful Authority ? ”

A. *Yes.*

Q. “ Have Princes or Priests ever produc’d a Commission from God, for imposing any Parts or Modes
“ of Worship not required in the New Testament ? ”

A. *Yes.*

Q. “ Where Great Men and Superiors have an
“ Authority, or, Right to command, are inferior
“ Men excused from Obedience ? ”

A. *No.*

If your Reader would take the same Method with the other Parts of your Book, believe me, it would be to the full as good a Vindication of the Church of *England*, as it is at present of the *English* Separatists. And so I bid you Farewell.

T H E E N D.





